Abstract

This thesis traces the growth of the National Ballet of Canada (NBC) and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) through international ballet exchanges and reveals how foundational they were to the companies’ current reputations. In the mid-twentieth century, the development of Canadian ballet was intertwined with international exchanges because the Canada Council of the Arts viewed national success as synonymous with international success. The National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet developed different ways of being viewed as Canadian while abroad and established themselves as noteworthy cultural institutions. This thesis is also a study of the non-state actors’ role – ballet companies’ personnel, artistic directors, dancers, and media – in producing or furthering diplomatic relations with host countries and how they either upheld or contradicted state interests. Chapter two examines ten years (1958-1968) of negotiations between the NBC and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes to show how the NBC used Canadian cultural policies and Canada’s national language to attain international tours that focused on fostering the company’s growth. Also, the tour resulted in the NBC building a relationship with Mexico without much help from the government. Chapter three studies the RWB’s engagement with Jamaica for the country’s independence celebrations in 1963 from the perspective of non-state actors – the dancers, media, and private sectors – to understand the motivations in carrying out state interest. Chapter four compares the NBC exchange to Europe in 1972 and the RWB visit to Latin America in 1974. It explores cultural diplomacy policies, Canadian public reactions, and ‘Canadianness.’ Ultimately, this thesis aims to reveal the complex relationship between national identity/governmental interests and artistic development in cultural diplomacy endeavours.
Acknowledgements

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of External Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>INBA</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Library and Archives of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBC</td>
<td>Les Grands Ballet Canadiens</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>National Ballet of Canada</td>
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<td>RWB</td>
<td>Royal Winnipeg Ballet</td>
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<td>TCA</td>
<td>Trans-Canada Airlines</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“It was an international feeling. You know, when I became a member of the Company... I used to have to go somewhere like the Eaton store. It used to be practically across the street from the studios in Winnipeg, and there was somewhere in that store that I could go cash my paycheques. And I remember the first time I went to cash my paycheque, and she saw that it was from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and she was like, ‘oh my goodness, you are a member of the RWB.’ Like it meant something to be a member of that Company because we had an amazing reputation! We had an international reputation.” – Patti Milne, member of the corps de ballet from 1971-1974.

Today, Canada has a rich ballet tradition, with three internationally recognized ballet companies—the National Ballet of Canada (NBC), the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB), and the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (LGBC). However, the road to national and international acceptance was long and arduous, and ballet only became a widely recognized art form in Canadian culture in the mid-twentieth century. Central to the growing acceptance of Canada’s ballet companies was international exposure, as ballet exchanges were the basis for the transmission of the art form worldwide. Older companies, renowned dancers, and ‘cultured’ audiences would judge the emerging ballet companies on these exchanges. Canadian cultural elites, in particular, looked to foreign experts to inform them about what was good in Canada. As such, touring was vital to the companies’ growth and was supported by the ballet company personnel and the government. Thus, ballet exchanges provide an opportunity to shed light on changing Canadian cultural policies in the twentieth century. In addition, these exchanges enable an analysis of the companies’ trajectory and decision-making in pursuit of excellence.

This thesis focuses on five major international exchanges: the NBC tours to Mexico in 1958 and 1968, the RWB engagement to Jamaica in 1963, the NBC exchange to Europe in 1972, and finally, the RWB visit to Latin America in 1974. Out of the many different international tours by Canadian ballet companies performed throughout the mid-twentieth century, my decision to study these particular tours was based on the engagements’ prominence and relevance to the
companies, the government, and Canadian cultural policies. For example, the NBC’s tours to Mexico in 1958 and 1968 were the NBC’s first engagement outside of Canada and the United States. They also occurred during a pivotal moment in history for Canadian culture. As a result, they make an excellent case study on the importance on how Canadian cultural institutions required international acceptance to be deemed successful domestically. Similar to the NBC, the RWB tour to Jamaica was the RWB’s first international tour outside of North America. Thus, it is an excellent comparison to the NBC experience of beginning to tour globally and helps to establish the company differences in negotiating cultural policies. This tour was also relevant in its status as a cultural and political goodwill mission between colonial, Commonwealth nations. Therefore, this tour highlights the governmental interests in a relationship, as Canada attempted to grow its friendship with Jamaica. Finally, the 1970s were the pinnacle of Canadian cultural diplomacy; policies changed, which led to an increased focus on cultural exchanges. As a result, studying the RWB and the NBC’s involvement in these policy changes can illuminate problems in how the government operated in cultural diplomacy. Overall, by discussing tours that occurred around the same time, I can establish a narrative regarding the trajectory of ballet companies’ and Canada’s policies.

I have chosen to study two out of Canada’s three major ballet companies because of the space and time available in this thesis. The LGBC also toured internationally. More research needs to be done in this area to provide a more in-depth understanding of the LGBC’s role in cultural diplomacy and domestic policies, particularly considering that Canadian federal foreign policies grew out of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution. As a result, the LGBC has a unique context as a Quebec institution. While I neglected the LGBC experience, choosing to study the RWB and the NBC allows me to compare two institutions formed by British women. In addition, the RWB and the NBC were rivals. As such, I can analyze how the companies went about pursuing national success and compare the companies’ trajectories. In doing so, it becomes evident that the two
companies had unique strategies based on the manner in which the companies were formed, motives of the artistic directors, and approaches to artistic development.

The following chapter will provide an overview of the research aims, current literature, and sources utilized in this thesis. I will first introduce the RWB and the NBC and discuss their domestic and international growth. I will also provide a brief overview of the history of ballet in Canada from the mid-twentieth century because there were foundational events that helped solidify ballet status in Canada. I will then explore the historiography of dance diplomacy, a significant component of cultural diplomacy, and discuss how my Canadian contribution does and does not confirm more general historiographic trends. Finally, I will end with a discussion on the sources upon which this thesis is based and provide a structure for the thesis itself.

1.1 An Overview of Ballet in Canada

During the mid-twentieth century, ballet was relatively new in Canada and was growing in popularity. In 1938, Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Hey Farrally started the Winnipeg Ballet Club. Fourteen years later, Queen Elizbeth II granted a royal title, changing its name to Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Both women moved from England to Canada together at the age of 36 and 23, respectively. The RWB was not the first introduction Canadians had to ballet. There were individuals, such as Russian-born Boris Volkoff, who ran an amateur performance group in Toronto, who had brought ballet to Canada. Volkoff’s group even performed in Berlin during the 1936 Olympic games. However, the RWB would outlast these amateur groups to become the oldest and longest-running ballet company in Canada and the second oldest, to the San Francisco Ballet, in North America.

In the beginning, Lloyd and Farrally offered free tuition to students who passed their auditions in the hope of gaining enough “raw material” to start a company. Their strategy

worked; they received 200 responses to their advertisements, and they accepted two dozen people in their twenties. In the years following, the club would persist through several ups and downs, including their studio burning down, while also achieving a number of “firsts.” For example, it was the first Canadian company to travel to several countries and continents, such as Russia, Europe, Australia, South America, and the U.S. The company was also the first ballet company in the Commonwealth granted a “royal” title. The RWB performers connected with the audience because they offered entertaining “pop” dances rather than focusing on delivering classics. Driving the company’s programming policy was, according to Max Wyman, a focus on “eclecticism and salability.” This mandate allowed the company to grow with its audience and offer something for everyone.

Lloyd and Farrally built this mandate around their experience immigrating to the Canadian prairies and from their previous experience dancing. Both Lloyd and Farrally were not only trained in the classics but also had learned many other dances, such as the waltz, polka, and Revived Greek dancing. When building a company, the women’s appreciation for other styles and types of dancing helped diversify the choreography, particularly considering Lloyd was the principal choreographer in the early years. They, however, were trained in the Royal Academy of Dancing, the leading British training organization, which gave them a competitive advantage over other amateur dance schools in Canada: a lasting effect of colonialism. Furthermore, coming to the prairies opened the Lloyd and Farrally’s opportunity to build “an audience for the kind of ballet they knew how to produce” and shape dancers as they wished. As dance scholar Cheryl Smith stated:

2 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 22.
3 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 2.
4 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 227.
5 Cheryl A. Smith, “‘Stepping Out’: Canada’s Early Ballet Companies 1939-1963” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2000), 75-80.
6 Cheryl A. Smith, “‘Stepping Out’,” 85.
In a larger North American city, or in Great Britain, they would not have had the same degree of freedom in their creative life, even as women in a women’s world. In England, Lloyd and Hey Farrally might have been hampered by any number of things: critical colleagues, family pressures, more professional ballet competitors, audiences with more defined expectations of ballet, or the women’s own lack of experience with the classic ballet canon. Winnipeg offered Lloyd and Hey Farrally space, space to develop a new style, to plant the seeds and experiment in relative isolation.7

As such, the two women began to develop their own niche, which Arnold Spohr, Artistic Director from 1958-1988, used to develop the company’s international reputation. In addition, it was this experimental style that attracted dancers from all around the world. Eric Horenstein, a member of the RWB from 1972-1978, wrote, “I was attractive to choreographers because of a theatrical style, bright red hair, and particular aptitude for jazz, modern choreographies, and dramatic interpretation. The RWB was a good fit. I preferred it to Joffrey (NYC) where I’d also had scholarship study.”8

Following the establishment of the RWB, a group of balletomanes drawn from the Canadian cultural elites desired a national company. Celia Franca moved to Canada from London after receiving an invitation from Sydney Mulqueen, Pearl Whitehead, and Aileen Wood to start a national ballet. This move led to the formation of the National Ballet of Canada in 1951 with Franca as artistic director, a title she held until the mid 1970s. Franca and the Board of Directors were impatient and ambitious. They wished to form the leading ballet company in Canada. As such, the company came together quickly, and by November 1951, they had their first performance and rapidly grew to be the largest company in Canada. Although the NBC was established after the RWB and other small dance clubs, it is commonly stated in publicity documents, and by Franca herself, that Franca built the NBC from nothing or from a “cultural

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7 Smith, “‘Stepping Out,’” 85-86.
8 Eric Horenstein (Dancer, Royal Winnipeg Ballet), interview by the author, November 2020.
This narrative was produced because Franca’s devotion to British classical style and the canon of great ballets. Franca trained under the Irish Ninette de Valois, founder of the Royal Ballet (formerly the Sadler’s Wells Ballet). She also taught with Stanislas Idzikowski and Marie Rambert—two other influential people in the ballet world, who had ties to the Cecchetti ballet style. As a result, Franca was dedicated to the Cecchetti style of ballet, which had a strong foothold in the British performance tradition. It was this style that Franca used to establish the NBC. The Cecchetti tradition did not have a foothold in Canada before the arrival of Franca, and because Lloyd and Farrally did not uphold this standard, Franca viewed the RWB as nothing. 10 In her memoir, she wrote, “the United States had some professional ballet companies of its own… but in Canada there was nothing comparable. A scattering of ballet schools offered the best they could and, in the circumstances, obviously could not aspire to a ‘graduate’ level of instruction.” 11

Les Grands Ballet Canadiens was established in 1957. The company grew out of Ludmilla Gorny Chiriaeff’s contract with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Chiriaeff moved to Montreal in 1951-1952 from Riga Latvia, and within weeks of arriving, she secured a deal with the CBC to create ballets for television. Five years later, she launched the LGBBC. Part of the reason she was able to secure this role with the CBC was her Russian name and upbringing. Russian dancers enjoyed a level of prestige and status among balletomanes. She was also willing to work under poor conditions provided by the CBC. Following the creation of the LGBBC, her company grew alongside the other two companies.

As these companies were being founded, a couple of significant events helped establish ballet in Canada: the creation of Canadian Ballet Festivals and the Canada Council of the Arts.

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9 Smith, “‘Stepping Out,’” 105.
10 James Neufeld, Passion to Dance: The National Ballet of Canada (Toronto: Dundurn, 2011), iBook, Ballet in Canada Before the National Ballet.
The Canadian Ballet Festivals occurred from 1948 to 1954. According to dance scholar Amy Bowring, the festivals ushered in an era of professionalization of dance because they “acted as a national showcase for dance and attracted nation-wide media attention.”12 The festivals aimed to “encourage the work of existing and future dance groups, develop an appreciation for Canadian dance, create a professional field for Canadian dancers so that they can earn a living in Canada, and develop a national ballet company.”13 Over the years, the festivals achieved their goals. For example, dancers gained performing experiences that helped them find work in the NBC, the RWB or on television, choreographers were encouraged and created several Canadian original pieces, there was significant media coverage, and during the 1950 festival, Franca attended to scout dancers and assess the potential of starting a professional national ballet company. In this sense, as Smith writes, the festivals were “the missing link between the unorganized amateurs and the professional companies.”14 They “set the stage” for the professionalization of dance in Canadian to take place in the following years.

The Canada Council was also central to the development of dance and ballet across Canada. As the current scholarship highlights, the Canada Council ensured the survival of the three companies.15 The Canada Council, formed in 1957, was mandated to act for the Canadian government to help fund and promote Canadian culture. In 1962, the Council made a consequential decision to establish a pay structure in which, out of the Council’s dance funding,  

13 Bowring, “Setting the Stage for Professionalization,” 77.
14 Smith, “ ‘Stepping Out,’ ” 69.
they would pay the NBC 50 percent and the RWB and the LGBC each 25 percent. Prior to this decision, ballet presented several problems to the Canada Council and as an art form in Canada. Officials referred to these problems as “the ballet problem.”

The ballet problem was multi-faceted. Firstly, ballet was financially unstable. In the first year of the Canada Council, the NBC received $50,000, the RWB $20,000, and the committee also offered the LGBC funding. The NBC requested additional financing, which the Council provided, and in the 1958-59 season, the NBC received $85,000, while the RWB got $32,600 and LGBC obtained $8,000.16 This increased funding did not do much to minimize the gaps between production costs and box-office sales.17 The nature of ballet and the geographical vastness of Canada made this art form particularly unstable. For example, a commissioned ballet also required the development of music. In addition, moving personnel, sets and dancers across Canada was costly. However, this was the reality for Canada if the Council wanted arts to reach communities across the country. As a result, intertwined with financial instability were concerns about regionalism. In the 1957-58 annual report, the Canada Council explicitly stated that it is the Council’s responsibility to “assist some of the leading artists and performing organizations to visit other parts of the country and enable people to hear their work and enjoy their performances.”18 Finally, the Council had concerns associated with artistic mediocrity and regional representation. There were concerns that the NBC could not live up to their name, while the RWB was known for catering to the Western audience.19

All of these issues came to a head in 1962 with the Kirstein-Buckle Ballet Survey. This survey’s main goal was to determine whether the Canada Council should continue supporting all three Canadian ballet companies or focus their attention on one. The Council selected two foreign

17 Cornell, “Ballet Problem,” 226
experts, Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder of the New York City Ballet, and British dance critic Richard Buckle to evaluate the companies’ merit and make a recommendation. This request, however, followed the first report on the state of Canadian ballet by Guy Glover, a well-known Canadian art critic. After noting the RWB and LGBC “responded to provincial audiences with more success than the National Ballet,” Glover made two main recommendations. First, he recommended that aid should only be considered when recommended by an artistic advisory, comprised of non-partisan ballet critics, professional writers, dramatists, designers and artists.\(^{20}\) Secondly, he felt that “Canada Council grants should be given only for specific projects, training and touring,” thus removing the blanket “no question asked” operational grant.\(^{21}\) Glover’s report, however, was disregarded for an unknown reason, according to dance scholar Katherine Cornell. Kirstein and Buckle were then commissioned to assess the ballet companies. Buckle’s assessment of the companies supported much of Glover’s criticism, and noted the Canada Council had to contend with crucial issues, such as “full-time employment for Canadian dancers, honourable recognition of the pioneers and a need to consolidate their work.” He also did not support merging the three companies into one because it would be a “financial and political nightmare.”\(^{22}\) This recommendation countered the desires of Council Arts Supervisor Peter Dwyer. Kirstein was outspoken about his criticism of all three companies even before being asked to provide his opinion, and thus he recommended that the Canada Council stop all public funding to the existing companies and start a new company. Not straying from Glover’s and Buckle’s report, Kirstein also believed that Canada Council should “circumvent any further competitive or regional issues” and that the ballet companies should include good Canadian composers, poets, and painters in their choreography. He also believed that Canadian ballet should switch away from the British method to Russian training. Despite the $15,000 price tag, the Kirstein-Buckle Ballet Survey was

\(^{22}\) Cornell, “Ballet Problem,” 233-234.
not made public, and no recommendations were ever “directly applied because of the implications for the personnel involved in the Council and in the companies.” As Cornell wrote, “[the Council members] all had different visions of what dance in Canada should be, so the inevitable solution was ‘laissez danser.’” Following this survey, the ballet companies were guaranteed a certain percentage of the Council funds allotted for ballet.

Woven into the ballet companies and Canadian ballet’s history is a story of international acceptance for the companies and for Canada. For a ballet company, international acceptance was imperative for success not only abroad but also in Canada. Canadian cultural experts relied in part on the international opinion of the companies, as evident during the Ballet Survey. At the same time, in the twentieth century, Canada attempted to brand itself as mature and able to stand up to and with other more powerful countries, and cultural institutions like the NBC and the RWB were evidence of its growing distinct cultural identity. Despite the importance of touring to the growth of the companies’, international tours have received limited attention in the Canadian ballet scholarship. In addition, Canadian ballet touring history is also a key part of Canadian cultural diplomacy literature, an area of scholarship that is relatively new and to date has neglected dance’s involvement. As such, the aims of this thesis are two-fold. First, I aim to position international tours into the Canadian ballet narrative to reveal how foundational they were to the companies’ current reputations. Within this aim, I am drawing attention to smaller tours early in the companies’ histories that simply become footnotes in the companies’ greater narratives. Secondly, I aim to weave ballet into the cultural diplomacy narrative to shed light on the role of company personnel in producing cultural relationships with host countries and how the dancers and artistic directors either upheld or contradicted state interests.

1.2 Historiography: Frameworks, Themes, and Approaches

Cultural diplomacy, a branch of public diplomacy and soft diplomacy, aims to foster a relationship between two or more countries by using attraction as opposed to coercion on the people-to-people level. Aimed at turning the elite or mass population opinions of one nation toward that of another nation, cultural exchanges use non-state actors to support government policies. Cultural diplomacy has been a part of the attempt to project a mature Canadian nation, particularly in the Cold War period. Much of the current Canadian scholarship on cultural diplomacy has focused on nation-branding. Cultural diplomacy also studies various themes such as policies and non-state actor’s roles. Scholars have also discussed cultural diplomacy through hockey games, music performances, and art exhibition exchanges. As mentioned, ballet does not feature prominently in the literature.


Allana Lindgren briefly discussed the NBC’s strategy to engage in propaganda for the government in order to popularize ballet. According to Lindgren, during tours, dancers acted as unofficial state agents. For example, by smiling in photos with the Canadian ambassador to the United States, “they were engaging in the project of solidifying Canada’s relationship with its foreign friends and Cold War foes.” This examination, however, is very short and requires more exploration. Kailey Hansson’s article is the only in-depth work on the cultural impacts of Canadian ballet companies’ appearances on the international stage by studying ballet exchanges with the Communist World. She highlighted that while Canadian officials saw cultural exchanges as providing an opportunity to “expose people under communist rule to the freedom enjoyed by artists in the West…”, the exchanges ultimately “revealed all that was lacking with Canadian ballet in particular and the development of the arts in general.” In addition, she explored how cultural exchanges provided an opportunity for government officials and cultural elites to make Canada more culturally distinctive and distance itself from the United States to present a very “‘high-culture’ and ‘European’ notion of itself.” As a result, this article provides insights into the development of Canadian cultural identity through ballet. Further, Hansson explained that the


Canada Council saw cultural exchanges as an opportunity for companies to acquire new styles and techniques, resulting in a “distinctive Canadian style of dance.”

While Canadian cultural diplomacy scholarship minimally discusses dance, there is a new but growing interest in “dance-in-diplomacy” during the post-war period in the literature outside of Canada. For many countries, this period is significant for studying this dance-in-diplomacy because governments worldwide recognized dance’s unique ability to transcend languages and promote country ideals in hostile environments. In 1998, dance historian Naima Prevots produced a landmark study which examined how dance became a part of the United States’ cultural diplomacy program to export American ideals. Her central argument was that while government support of art abroad was the result of the Cold War, Cold War politics had little to do with decisions on which troupes were chosen by the U.S. Dance Panel. She claimed that the Dance Panel considered artistic ability above all. Although several scholars have since argued against this claim, Prevots’ book turned researchers, particularly American historians, to dance’s roles in the Cold War.

The early studies that followed Prevots concentrated on the Superpowers’ cultural diplomacy programs, particularly from an American perspective. American scholars have

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31 A panel was set up to make suggestions to the government on which company they should support.
examined major state-sponsored dance tours that aimed to present, in metanarrative, totalizing terms, Communism or Capitalism as superior to the other. These main tours included the first dance exchange between the Superpowers, which involved the Moiseyev Dance Company, a Soviet folk company that visited the United States, and New York City Ballet’s successful trip to the Soviet Union, which occurred during the Cuban missile crisis. There has also been considerable research on the various American tours that took place outside the Soviet Union to combat the spread of Communism. For example, Martha Graham, famous for her performances of “Americana,” toured around Europe in the 50s, 60s and 70s, and José Limón, the first artist to receive state support under the Eisenhower’s Emergency Fund for International Affairs, visited South America with his company in 1954. Similarly, scholars of the Soviet Union have analyzed the Bolshoi Ballet western premier in London in 1956 and visit to America in 1959 from a Soviet point of view.

In more recent years, this scholarship has significantly shifted away from centring on the Superpower binary to focus on dance exchanges around the world. The shift has opened up a number of opportunities to study the significance of dance exchanges between countries. First, scholars have opened up the discussion to understand the different models used by governments


Hallinan, “Cold War Cultural Exchange and the Moiseyev Dance Company; Croft, Dancers as Diplomats; Harris, Making Ballet American.


to interact with foreign countries as well as with their own country’s citizens. Within these models, there were key similarities and differences. For Cuban-Soviet, Cuban-Mexican, and China-Asia exchanges, cultural diplomacy took the form of affective bonds. The participants would engage with each other on an everyday basis, learning and teaching each other about their cultures and movements and developing affective bonds. This model differed from the typical model in the United States and the Soviet Union, which relied on short-term exchanges based on one-off performance that would aim to represent government ideologies as opposed to ongoing interactions.

Beyond identifying different diplomacy models, these studies also show the variety of actions taken by countries in their attempts to develop transnational relations through dance-in-diplomacy. As Elizabeth Schwall argued, writing about Cuba and Mexico, the shift to a smaller country reframes the relationship between the dancers and government. In the Superpower narrative, dancers were often only considered with regard to the state as the officials chose who went where when. And while new scholarships on the United States have begun to consider dancers’ experiences and motivations, Schwall provided an explicit discussion on the role of dancers themselves in leading some of these diplomacy initiatives. As such, Schwall delivers a framework for understanding countries where dance-in-diplomacy is implicit. Or, in other words, when exchange appears to be an artistic versus state initiative.

Secondly, by decentering the Superpower binary, some scholarship moves around and through the Cold War in different and illuminating ways. Some academics countered the common narrative of the Cold War world. Alexander Golovlev, by looking at France’s activities in Austria, pointed out how cultural superiority was also a competition among the Allies during the Cold War. While the Cold War developed as a binary between Capitalism and Communism and

West versus East, Golovlev highlighted that it was not black or white on the Allied side; countries had their own motivation for cultural exchanges beyond combatting Communism.\textsuperscript{40} Other scholars move past Cold War politics. Schwall contended that exchanges can reveal more than Cold War politics. The performances also commented on “local, national, and regional issues.”\textsuperscript{41}

In particular, Schwall discussed the Cuba-Mexico relationship in terms of revolution and how this bonded the dancers. This extension of the scholarship within and beyond Cold War politics opens up what dance tours can focus on and still remain within the dance-in-diplomacy literature during the post-war period.

Across the whole of the literature, there are a myriad of other themes, approaches, and debates discussed by scholars. One dominant approach to dance-in-diplomacy is to study the performances’ reception to understand the degree of cultural convergence promoted by the exchanges. For example, Victoria Hallinan used reports of individuals’ reactions, anecdotes, ticket sales, government reports, and Igor Moiseyev’s account to “assess whether the [Moiseyev’s Dance Company’s] tours were successful in disseminating a positive image of the Soviet Union.”\textsuperscript{42} Through this analysis of the reception of performances, she revealed that Americans saw themselves in the Soviet Union dancers and recognized similar attitudes around gender, race, and ethnicity. Thus, Hallinan argued that the tour broke down stereotypes Americans had regarding citizens of the Soviet Union and created a favourable convergence of the cultures.

When studying the reception of performances, effective works consider the context of the audience and press. Camelia Lenart, when writing about reviews, made an assertive effort to reconstruct the audience to help contextualize the audience’s response. This allowed her to understand the nuances and differences of responses across a number of countries and visits. She did not simply show that there was an increased appreciation for Martha Graham in France over

\textsuperscript{40} Golovlev, “Dancing the Nation?,” 166-183.
\textsuperscript{41} Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 681.
\textsuperscript{42} Hallinan, “Cold War Cultural Exchange and the Moiseyev Dance Company,” 39.
time, but revealed how and why attitudes shifted. This method was not limited to the audience, but could also be utilized to explore the ideological leanings of the press. For example, Gonçalves made distinctions between what the left-wing versus the right-wing press stated about the tour and its cancellation. Overall, by understanding the ideological and diverse makeups of the audience and press, scholars reveal that the reception of performances was not necessarily homogenous within countries.

Scholars also show that there was discord between how the cultural diplomats viewed tours and some of the reasons behind positive reviews. For instance, with respect to the Ballets de Paris tour to Austria in 1948, Golovlev observed that the French cultural diplomats regarded the visit as a success because the performance was received positively. However in reality critics were caught in a discursive battle and inter-Allied tensions, which created an expectation for the Austrian press to “praise their first cultural offensives” unconditionally, thus “many critics (such as the Wiener Tagezeitung, the British-led Weltpresses, and the musically relevant Wiener Zeitung) chose not to highlight the problems they might have noticed.”43 Similarly, Cadra Peterson McDaniel discussed how the political officials interpreted reviews based on their perception of the press. She pointed out that free press was the norm in American, whereas the Soviet Union’s government strictly controlled the media. As a result, when Soviet officials saw the positive analyses of Soviet tours, they perceived it as the American government endorsing the Soviet ideology because to the Soviets, the choreography was infused with Marxist ideals. For example, in analyzing Romeo and Juliet, she argued the choreographer was thinking about state ideals and produced works around those thoughts by identifying how the choreographer represented the “historical transition from feudalism to the early development of capitalism”

43 Golovlev, “Dancing the Nation,” 176.
during Renaissance.”  

Scholars of dance-in-diplomacy have also analyzed who was involved in the tours and their motives. Since cultural diplomacy is political, this scholarship focuses on the government motives and actions associated with developing the exchanges. For sources focused on the United States and Soviet Union cultural diplomacy programs, the motives and actions of the states were relatively apparent as the tours were in response to the global political tensions. Scholars have also looked at specific host country contexts and their influence on the tours. For example, the U.S. targeted South America first because the State considered it a politically sensitive area with poorer living standards, making the citizens more vulnerable to Communism. However, the governments did not work alone. The dance companies, artistic directors, and private institutions were all also involved. In knowing these interactions, some scholars have attempted to understand the relationships among these three entities and how they did not always share interests. For example, Andrea Harris examined the “entanglement of state, private, and individual interests” to challenge the assessment that the “Americanization of Balanchine’s neoclassicism was completed” during the Cold War. Beyond challenging the U.S. ballet literature, Harris revealed that behind the tours were multiple interests and “give and takes” that allowed for the visits to occur. These included a state desire to show Americans as non-materialistic in order to combat communism. Simultaneously, the ballet company’s director wanted to “convince U.S. government and private foundations that dance was crucially valuable on the international scenes.”

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45 Copel, “State Department Sponsored Tours of José Limón and His Modern Dance Company, 1954 and 1957,” 4
By discussing public and private interactions, scholars have also opened up the binary that suggested that official tours were political and unofficial tours were apolitical, a theme within the broader cultural diplomacy literature. In her dissertation, Lenart focused on the private tours of Martha Graham and used “correspondences between high highly ranked officials and important offices of the institutions” to reveal that the State Department “helped with the preparation of the tour, and supervised her presence” in France, where she toured in 1950 before her official status as a cultural ambassador. In doing so, Lenart added to the discussion about U.S. “rehearsals” prior to its more official tours, but also exposed private tours where political and government intervention was not always visible. Similarly, Hansson commented on the unofficial nature of Canada’s exchanges with the Soviet Union, stating that tours and the managers “showed External Affairs how the private sphere could help project a positive image of Canada to a foreign audience.” Thus, as in the U.S., Canadian private tours had government links, thereby expanding the potential of when dance could be considered to be involved in diplomacy.

In these explorations into relationships and motives associated with dance-in-diplomacy, the dancers’ experiences in performing are under-examined because they are often overshadowed by the artistic directors and choreographers involved, who are seen as the brains behind the tours and artistic expression. As Croft wrote, “interviews also allow me to unsettle dance history’s singular emphasis on choreographer, undoing a familiar narrative that focuses on a choreographer (often a man) as a genius who guides and shapes a group of dancers (often primarily women).” Croft’s goals were to understand how dancers negotiated the expectation to convey the official American identity, which, as she stated, implied there was a non-official identity, with their own

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50 Croft, Dancers as Diplomats 25.
identities and with experiences that influenced their understanding of their identity.\textsuperscript{51} Studying the choreography from their experience, Croft showed how one movement represented multiple layered identities: “The first time the women hit the arm position they honored the United States; the second time they moved through this position, they represented not just the United States, but also ballet, and more specifically, New York City Ballet dancers in a Balanchine ballet. The women did not simply reproduce a homogenous or essentialized conception of official American identity, but instead marked multiple layers of affiliation through physical expression.”\textsuperscript{52} Croft also discussed how experiences of touring challenged the dancers’ understanding of their identity as they began to understand the Russian origins of ballet moves that their choreographer Balanchine claimed as his own. As a result, the dancers began to see themselves within the larger dance context, thereby challenging the uniquely American identity they were requested to inhabit.\textsuperscript{53} Importantly, this point of view contests the assumption that the identity of performances is static and declared by the choreographers: an idea implied by scholars who solely study the messages behind the choreography.\textsuperscript{54}

In Schwall’s article on the Cuban-Mexican relationship, the dancers’ experiences were also at the heart of the research. It aimed to understand how “love, hope, anger, and disenchantment” “guided dancing revolutionaries.”\textsuperscript{55} The Mexican dancers were not official representatives, but despite that, they were “working for an international political cause: building a revolutionary culture to precipitate social change.”\textsuperscript{56} She argued that studying dancers’ experiences demonstrated that “political leaders were not alone in forging international relationships” as dancers “articulated careful statements of friendship and even kinship with

\textsuperscript{51} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 8-9.  
\textsuperscript{52} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 50.  
\textsuperscript{53} Harris, \textit{Making Ballet}, 57.  
\textsuperscript{55} Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 686.  
\textsuperscript{56} Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 688.
political and artistic comrades.” In other words, it was the personal side of the Cold War in Latin America that Schwall was interested in. Thus, she moves the concept of dance-in-diplomacy from a belief that political officials are essential to the tour to an understanding the dancers can be as important as politicians.

Much scholarship has focused on whether tours promoted artistic or political development in the host or sharing countries. Scholars have had an easier time commenting on the former rather than the latter. In one way or another, many scholars have noted some form of artistic development resulting from the tours. For example, Hansson demonstrated that Canada’s exchange with Soviet dancers “revitalized the National [Ballet of Canada]’s repertoire and introduced the techniques and style that had made Russia ballet dancers so successful on the world stage.” Korppi-Tommola argued that Martha Graham’s company influenced the Finnish dance traditions because of the political environment that promoted direct transmission.

However, there is no consensus on whether these exchanges were a political success at least from the point of view of the state. Some scholars considered these exchanges successful politically; however, they do not specify how. For instance, Lucy Phillips made the claim that Graham’s choreography aided in developing political alliances because it created a metaphorical community between the host country intelligentsia and Americans based on “common understanding of art” that “could not be understood by the ‘other’ or the less well educated in the Western canon.” However, she does not specify what political alliances were developed. For example, she simply wrote, “retelling Greek myths to Greeks in Athens, or using cultural convergences, alongside the complexities of modernism allowed host country elites to join with their American

57 Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 703, 701.
58 Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 686
counterparts.” Melinda Copel also engaged with the question of whether exchanges influenced politics. She noted that the U.S. State Department considered the tours to be a success, but observed that the actual achievements were difficult, “if not impossible to determine.” Instead of making a definitive statement on the success, she chose to point out the irony in the values of the modern dance form and economic policies that protected U.S. economic interests presented at the Rio Conference that occurred at the same time as the tours.

Some less discussed, but still significant, themes are how scholars consider gender or race and looking at dance-in-diplomacy as the step to building a national dance identity. Regarding gender and race, scholars were more apt to discuss these themes when studying a female or a non-white choreographer. A number of these scholars also focused on United States case studies, and noted that State Department support of female and non-white performers helped present America as inclusive. They also commented on Graham’s political importance through socializing that was enabled by her gender. Graham provided interactions with “wives of diplomats and business leaders abroad” and through “teas and in one-on-one meetings, could address the elite global leaders in a way that men could not.” These discussions, however, were brief.

Croft provided broader dialogue about race and gender by studying the identities from lived experience. In studying African American dancers, she too noted that the United States supported dancers, such as Alvin Ailey, as a strategy to promote American ideals as superior. However, she revealed that the performances were also a form of self-determination for the dancers. One dancer noted that performing Revelations, an Ailey creation, “allowed her to

64 Copel, “State Department Sponsored Tours of José Limón and His Modern Dance Company, 1954 and 1957,” 304.
publicly embody part of her familial racial history that she had learned to suppress, partially through her ballet training in predominantly white Montclair, New Jersey.”\textsuperscript{67} Furthermore, Croft showed that the government’s pamphlets at the performances positioned “white federal legislators as the primary actors in the civil rights movement.” At the same time, Ailey’s creations “challenged this narrative by recognizing African Americans’ role in the ongoing struggle for equality.”\textsuperscript{68} Moreover, in studying Graham, Croft discussed intersectionality by noting that Graham’s race allowed her to play with sexual and gender norms. Croft observed that the government supported Graham over African American Katherine Dunham because Dunham’s “performance of female sexuality… emerged from black modernity borne of cultural fusion rather than race-blind universalism.”\textsuperscript{69}

Hansson and Hallinan, in contrast, looked at race and gender from the perspective of the audience and critics. Hansson briefly examined the emphasis of the Canadian press on a defected Soviet dancer’s “otherness.” Hallinan, on the other hand, extensively applied a gender lens as she analyzed the reception of tours. She pointed out how the American audience recognized themselves in the Soviet dancers because they presented similar ideas about masculinity, femininity and gender roles. She mentioned how the viewers noticed that based on gender, dancers were assigned specific steps and men and women expressed love for each other.\textsuperscript{70} In doing so, Hallinan showed a way to study gender when not specifically studying women’s choreography, thus providing a broader understanding of how the audience read the exchange and what that revealed about the host or visiting country.

Finally, scholars have studied dance-in-diplomacy in relation to the country’s attempts to develop a national dance. Both Harris and Christina Ezrahi’s discussions on dance-in-diplomacy are a chapter within the development of American and Russian ballet, respectively. For Ezrahi,\textsuperscript{67} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 71.\textsuperscript{68} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 89.\textsuperscript{69} Croft, \textit{Dancers as Diplomats}, 114.\textsuperscript{70} Hallinan, “Cold War Cultural Exchange and the Moiseyev Dance Company,” 212.
diplomacy was a necessary discussion because in the 1950s both government officials and cultural leaders feared artistic stagnation, which “created a potent opportunity for artistic repossession, a form of systemic subversion that exploits the system for goals foreign to it in order to creatively adapt or redefine the ideological limits imposed on the field of cultural production by the regime.”71 Harris used the discussion of diplomacy and motivations to challenge the dominant narrative that Balanchine destiny to develop classical ballet in American to show the alliance he built with the government, private and corporate foundations advantageous position himself as national institution.72 Vermeyden, similarly, discussed Egypt’s use of diplomacy in relation to the development of Reda Folkloric Dance Troupe as the national dance. Schwall, on the other hand, explained how Cuba’s exchange with Russia helped mature the art form in Cuba. However, more significantly, Cuban dancers and choreographers formed a national identity by making “choices about anatomical placement in ballet technique and representations of race and nation in folkloric aesthetics to distinguish their dance practices from Soviet ones.”73

Following the footstep of scholars who decentred the Superpower narrative, this thesis does not engage with either the United States or the Soviet Union. This alone, I hope, helps establish that Canada and the host countries, particularly the Global South, were more than pawns and bystanders in the Cold War. In addition, Cold War politics do not define my study of the exchanges in the way that it has for much existing research. Rather, I aim to unearth various political and cultural changes, both domestically and internationally in post-war Canada. My thesis will add to the small scholarship that focuses on the value of cultural diplomacy in developing a national dance identity. For Canada, ballet exchanges occurred when the government intensified its focus on developing “Canadian culture.” As such, these exchanges

71 Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin*, 103.
cannot be disentangled from Canadian cultural politics. Thus, providing an opportunity to study the development of a Canadian identity through international exchanges.

Furthermore, running through my thesis are draws on themes and approaches from the dance-in-diplomacy scholarship. Firstly, since I am studying these tours from the perspective that they helped develop a national dance identity, I make comments on the artistic development of the companies. However, unlike current scholars, who focus on the dance form specifically, I primarily make comments about the companies’ growth and their overall trajectory from the tours. My analysis of artistic development is mostly reserved for comparison of the companies and how their style connected to Canadian cultural policies. It does not include an analysis of how the host countries’ culture influenced the RWB and the NBC. Along with artistic development, this thesis touches on political development in relation to the tours. However, this thesis falls within the scholarship that recognizes it is nearly impossible to see if the exchanges had any political significance. I do, however, make some observations when possible.

Secondly, the thesis relies on the audiences’ receptions of the tours. Audiences are a rich source in understanding similarities and differences among the views of multiple stakeholders, such as Canada and host countries’ views on cultural identities and diplomacy policies as well as the desires of the public in both Canada and the host country. In this sense, I am following other scholars’ mode of studying dance diplomacy by using the audience and press to study conflicts and convergence. I also provide some discussion on the context of Canadian newspapers in chapter four as it is significantly important to the discussion of the tours’ prominence. However, reconstruction of the audience does not play a major role in discussing host countries’ reviews in my thesis. This result was mainly due to challenges of reconstructing a foreign audience, particularly when I do not speak the language. This thesis also uses the critics who write about the audience reception to discuss non-state actors’ roles: a central theme throughout this thesis. Some
Canadian critics acted in the best interest of the state when travelling with the companies, whereas some did not.

Therefore, thirdly, a discussion on the non-state actor’s role and experiences during these international exchanges is prominent throughout this thesis. This thesis primarily focuses on the motives and interactions of the various interested parties in the exchange to reveal the collaboration and differing incentives between non-state actors and government actors. I argue that non-state actors are always more involved in these tours than they appeared in the press. Moreover, within these discussions, I turn to the dancer’s experience to provide even more complexity of the role of non-state actors as they had their own the emotions and experiences that differed from those of the ballet companies’ personnel who designed the tours. By choosing to include the dancer’s perspective, I add to Croft and Schwell’s scholarship focused on dancers’ experiences.

And finally, I briefly examine gender and race throughout the thesis. Similar to other scholars, these topics are not the main focus of my thesis. My discussions are scattered throughout the three chapters providing some analysis of social structure in Canada, hoping to provide direction for further research. The brief discussion on both is mainly due to the sources and the design of research, particularly regarding race. I was primarily focused on the non-state actors’ experiences in political endeavours and their relationship with the government. As such, this affected questions I developed when conducting oral interviews. Therefore, due to the lack of pointed questions for dancers about race, very little discussion emerged. This realization was particularly evident for those dancers that went to Jamaica, where a discussion on race could arise due to the interaction of white dancers with the primarily black population.

1.3 Sources and Thesis Structure

Studying a transnational history imposed a couple of challenges in conducting research and collecting sources. The majority of sources this research is based upon were collected from
the National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet institutional archives and four newspapers: *Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Winnipeg Tribune, and Calgary Herald*. Through these sources, I aim to understand the views of the ballet companies, including the perspectives of the artistic directors, managers, and board of directors, as well as the opinions of the Canadian public regarding the tours. As scholars like McDaniel have stated, by allowing my selection of sources to draw my attention to only the NBC, the RWB, and the Canadian public press, I would simply be telling one side of the story because an engagement was never a solo endeavour. Therefore, I made an assertive effort to search for and translate sources from the host countries’ perspectives. Luckily the institutional archives, held many newspaper articles from the host countries, allowing me to cross-examine opinions on the performance to provide a more nuanced discussion of the reception. These sources also helped me tease out some of the host countries’ motivations for pursuing a tour with a Canadian ballet company. When these sources from the host countries were insufficient, I turned to secondary sources to support my analysis, with the aim to provide a more accurate understanding of the relationships. The other historical actor I could not retrieve direct sources for was the Canadian government because I was unable to access the Library and Archives Canada due COVID-19 lockdowns. Therefore, I relied on the company institutional archives for details on the government’s involvement. This was possible because there were letters and board meeting minutes of the companies’ conversations with the Canada Council and the Department of External Affairs (DEA). These sources from these databases illuminate the relationship among private institutions, governments, and the public.

Beyond the institutional archives and newspapers, I also interviewed seven RWB dancers regarding their experience performing and travelling to Jamaica and Latin America. Four participants went to Jamaica and three went to Latin America. In these interviews, a number of questions focused on the politically significance of the tour and their experience. For example, I asked questions about their perspective of the tour, whether they felt they were representing
Canada, and their experiences at official reception dinners. I also wanted to learn about their days off, the audience reception, and what stood out to them in the host countries. Through these interviews, I gained many insights that enhance and alter the narrative of these exchanges, as the dancers embodied and challenged the expectations of Canadian dancers in foreign countries.

Overall, using multiple sources, this thesis aims to provide an in-depth analysis of how these tours were perceived and untangle the numerous motivations of private institutions, governments, dance companies and ballet dancers associated with the tours. It will piece together different narratives, understand the layers to exchanges, and reveal nuances between official and unofficial tours and differences between artistic expression versus nationalism.

In developing this analysis, this thesis has three chapters. The first two chapters each provide isolated discussions of the NBC’s and the RWB’s first tours outside of Canada and the United States. Chapter two focuses on the NBC tour to Mexico in 1958 and 1968. It examines the ten years of negotiating between the NBC and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) prior to the return tour. By reviewing this substantial process of negotiation, insights emerge into the ways the NBC used cultural policies and national language to achieve international tours that fostered the company’s growth. It also begins to reveal the distanced relationship the Canadian government had in designing a tour, despite projecting their involvement in the media. Chapter three expands on these relationships between the government and tour organizers as the RWB’s engagement to Jamaica in 1963 was connected to Jamaica’s independence celebration. Therefore, the media presented the tour as a goodwill mission, insinuating a growing connection between the two countries. This chapter also moves past the artistic director, company personnel, and governmental officials to focus on the dancers’ perspectives. These perspectives reveal that despite being non-state actors, the dancers did not necessarily ascribe to national interests, but rather were on the tour to dance. The final chapter, chapter four, provides a direct comparison of the ballet companies and their governmentally-sponsored tours in the 1970s. By concluding on a
comparison of high-profile, government-funded tours, this chapter aims to make a conclusion on the ballet companies’ trajectories. It compares the ballet companies’ strategies in their early tours to achieve an international reputation and reviews whether they maintained or deviated from their narratives in future years. This chapter also studies contradictions in Canadian cultural diplomacy by comparing the reaction of the Canadian public to the performances of the two ballet companies as these reactions help to reveal what Canadians saw and preferred as Canadian.

COVID-19 lockdowns impacted this thesis. I had initially planned to personally visit the RWB archives, the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), and return to the NBC Archives in the summer of 2020. However, closures and stay-at-home orders altered this plan. To continue studying the RWB under these circumstances, I was required to conduct research from a distance. I was in constant communication with the RWB archivist from September 2020 to April 2021. She emailed me related documents associated to Jamaica and Latin America tours as well as sources of individual pieces the company performed in the various countries. Ultimately, I could get enough sources to continue with my original plan of examining both the NBC and the RWB. I was, however, unable to access the LAC and the NBC archives in any way following the lockdowns. As such, I was incapable of viewing approximately 15 files labelled “tour abroad” or “Cultural Affair” under the NBC and RWB collections in the LAC or any European tour sources in the NBC archives. As a result, these absences did affect the thesis direction, particularly concerning the final chapter. I had to rely on other sources discussing government motives. These absences also shift the perspective of the tours. For example, I chose to focus on the dancer’s viewpoint in the Jamaica tour. For the final chapter, I focused on the media’s perception of companies as Canadian rather than discussing the behind-the-scenes nuances for the company and the government.

74 I had visited the NBC archives in February 2020 to collect sources on the Mexico tours and saw boxes labelled Europe.
Chapter 2

“Remember that you are ambassadors of Canada:” The National Ballet of Canada’s Journey for National Success through their Cultural Exchange with Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico

On February 6, 1968, the National Ballet of Canada (NBC) began their successful three-week tour in Mexico as a Canadian representative in the 1968 Mexican Olympics. As this tour was part of the cultural activities of the Olympics, it became a government sanctioned event. The Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, in a press release on the same day as the National Ballet’s first performance, announced, “Canada’s participation in the elaborate programme of cultural events commences today with performances by the National Ballet of Canada.” In effect, External Affairs was publicly authorizing the NBC performances as representing Canadian culture. However, this surface reading of the exchange neglects the approximately ten frustrating years of negotiations, which led to two failed attempts, before the NBC ever set foot in Mexico for the Olympics. Furthermore, it neglects the hard work, changing tactics and desires of non-state actors in pursuing cultural exchanges. And finally, it blurs the importance of opinions people abroad had on what is “Canadian.” Therefore, the main focus of this chapter is to look at the negotiations that occurred from 1958 to 1968 to understand how and why the National Ballet of Canada and Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) finally achieved a tour. By looking at all the conversations, patterns and deviations begin to emerge and reveal varying institutional motives and concerns. Ultimately, this chapter aims to show that

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2 The length is hard to calculate. The idea that the company would return to Mexico began immediately after their performances in 1958 in Mexico City. However, the first documentation discussing this in the National Ballet of Canada’s archives is in 1962. The negotiation intensified in 1964.
momentum for cultural exchange did not come from “above.” Rather, the build-up to the NBC 1968 tour to Mexico City, Jalapa, and Guadalajara highlights how non-state actors became the driving force for cultural exchanges.

Negotiations for this tour began as a simple attempt for a return appearance for the NBC in Mexico and ended with the NBC’s involvement in a cultural event for Canada as part of the Olympics. In May/June 1958, the NBC performed in Mexico for a three-week tour with a small group of 35 dancers. They premiered the entire four acts of Swan Lake, which, for the Mexican stage was a first. This tour was relatively successful; it was not entirely problem-free, but was a significant step in the development of the NBC. From the company’s inception in 1951 to 1958, the NBC had only performed in Canada and the United States. Thus, the engagement in Mexico was artistic director Celia Franca’s first endeavour in initiating international relations by building relationships with foreign countries’ institutions and offering to perform for them. The company was working on bringing dancers and choreographers of international reputation to the NBC. These efforts were attempts to build the NBC’s international standing, a vital component to developing arts in Canada. The 1950s was a time of cultural invigoration as the government was making a conscious effort in developing a Canadian culture. In 1949, Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent appointed Vincent Massey to investigate the arts and culture in Canada, and in 1951 Massey produced the Massey report, which recommended the government establish several institutions to promote and preserve Canadian culture. One important institution was the development of the Canada Council of the Arts in 1957, which the government tasked with fostering and promoting Canadian arts. It became the primary funding council for the arts.

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Therefore, it held, and still holds, significant power over shaping the cultural landscape in Canada.⁴

For ballet, the Council’s funding was essential to the survival of the companies. Some dance scholars have shown how ballet in Canada was in flux in the 1950s and 1960s because there were three major companies—the NBC, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) and Les Grands Ballet Canadiens (LGBC)—all of which needed financial support. Individuals at the Canada Council were critical of the company’s artistic expression and worried about the development of regionalism in the companies, which led to them requesting experts from London and New York City to comment on the ballet situation in Canada.⁵ However, scholars in discussing these critiques neglect to point out that the Council’s decision was based on the fact that for Canadian ballet, national success was intertwined with international success. For the Council, national and international success are often mentioned as one and the same.⁶ On the part of the ballet companies, and in particular the NBC, Franca desired her company to be recognized as a national company and saw it as deserving of federal funding. They had continually requested federal funding from inception; however, the government denied their request.

Under these circumstances, studying international ballet tours provides new insight into the way a ballet company went about promoting itself. For the NBC to achieve its dreams of being a national company, international relations and exposure were vital. The 1958 tour was a starting point for the NBC to gain a standard that was perceived as world-scale. This progression was challenging, as financial problems continually presented a barrier for the approximately 75-member company to travel abroad. In 1958, they also had some health issues, preventing them from performing their best. As the year went on, there was growing concern about obtaining

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⁵ Cornell, “The Ballet Problem”; Doolittle and Flynn, “Dancing in the Canadian Wasteland.”

permission to tour and about receiving positive reviews, so that the company could attach the tour
to national interests. They focused considerable effort on optimizing the dancers’ success in the
performances. They also began to alter their language to connect the tour to Canada and
emphasized it as being of “great importance for Canada,” mainly when asking for favours. Franca
further encouraged her dancers to embody the ideal Canadian citizen because she wanted the
dancers to be seen as working for the government as ambassadors. And finally, Franca fixated on
the dancers’ health to ensure a successful tour.

The NBC took these actions because it believed that its programs and mission aligned
with the idea held by Council members and Government officials, that Canadian culture was to be
sophisticated and high-class. This image included a focus on Canada’s “European notion of
itself” as anti-Americanism was a growing sentiment in the 1950s and 1960s. The NBC
recognized itself as projecting this European identity. It praised itself for performing the
European classics and rooted itself in the long ballet lineage of Europe. The NBC capitalized on
this narrative to position the tour as being ideal for Canadian cultural development by gaining
international exposure. I argue that the NBC wanted and encouraged ballet exchanges to achieve
its goals of being considered Canada’s national ballet company.

This cultural exchange, however, was not the product of just the NBC. The National
Ballet worked with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) to develop an agreement for the
NBC to perform in Mexico. The INBA is a cultural agency of the Mexican government,
established in 1947 by Carlos Chávez under the support of President Miguel Alemán. Chávez’s
desire to promote nationalism in Mexico and his fear of audiences’ desire for musical content
with European composers drove him to establish the INBA to preserve and spread national

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3 Hansson, “Dancing into Hearts and Minds,” 168; Sean Ruston, “The Origins and Development of
Canada’s Public Diplomacy,” in Branding Canada: Projecting Canada’s Soft Power through Public
artistic traditions. Part of the INBA structure involved the promotion of dance. However, in the 1960s, ballet in Mexico was not significantly well developed. The government had directed its support towards the modern dance tradition and the Ballet Folklórico de México, which is Mexico’s folkloric ensemble housing Mexico’s cultural traditions. This is most likely because the INBA wanted to promote Mexico’s cultural traditions. Elite Mexicans did have an affinity with European culture, though, and ballet stars like Anna Pavlova performed in Mexico City during the twentieth century. In addition, a few years prior to the NBC travelling to Mexico in 1958, the American Ballet Theatre toured Mexico for the first time, premiering Antony Tudor’s ballet, Dark Elegies, a piece that the NBC performed. Thus, having the NBC perform in Mexico was congruent with Mexico’s cultural interests.

The available pool of sources for this chapter has shaped my narrative of the relationship between the NBC and INBA. I have collected letters, contracts, and interdepartmental memos from the National Ballet of Canada’s institutional archives. Within these documents, are letters written by Mexican personnel; however, the majority of sources were written by staff associated with the National Ballet, and interdepartmental memos focus solely on the NBC, providing nuanced insight into the motivation and inner workings of the company. Many of the documents also contain the NBC retelling of discussions they had with the INBA. In these situations, I have been cautious in interpreting the NBC’s perspectives regarding the INBA’s motives as the complete truth. In addition, there is a language barrier when it comes to reading a number of the sources, including the newspaper clippings from Mexico, because they are in Spanish and require a third-party translation. Thus, this chapter is primarily from the perspective of the National

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9 Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 702.
10 Schwall, “Coordinating Movements,” 702.
Ballet of Canada. However, when available, I try to let the Mexican voices be heard. I have relied more heavily on secondary sources to understand the politics around Canada-Mexico relations and Mexican culture. Once again, these sources are limited to English written works. I also lack government documents, which could help to paint a comprehensive picture of the relationship between Mexico and Canada and the Canadian government’s involvement in promoting certain cultural exchanges. There is sufficient correspondence between the NBC and the Department of External Affairs (DEA) as well as the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, that the latter issue is relatively understood. However, it would be interesting to understand if, in the internal communication of External Affairs, officials were discussing the pros and cons of engaging in cultural exchanges in Mexico.

2.1 Who Initiated a Return Performance?

While the specifics of who initiated the National Ballet of Canada’s return to Mexico are unknown, due to missing documents in the archives, it is clear that it grew from the NBC’s and the INBA’s discussions and did not initially involve state officials. Following the May/June 1958 Mexican government-sponsored tour, both institutions appear to mention the prospect of a return appearance at some point over the next ten years. In a press release, date unknown, the NBC declared that the “possibility of a repeat season in Mexico was raised at a meeting recently in Montreal when the associate director of the Palace of Fine Arts raised the question in discussion with Carman B. Guild, general manager of the National Ballet of Canada and Klaus Kolmar, head of the concert division of the William Morris Agency.”\(^{13}\) It went on to explain that “several plans/were [sic] mentioned” including a plan for a similar tour as their previous engagement or “a season in Mexico City and tour of a number of other cities in Mexico and a more ambitious tour embracing a number of countries in Central and South America winding up in Mexico.”\(^{14}\) These

\(^{14}\) Charlotte n.d.
plans, however, did not come to fruition, and it appears that no serious attempts were made to
make a tour happen.\textsuperscript{15} Moreover, the NBC wanted the public to believe that they had a strong
relationship with Mexican authorities. In another press release, the NBC professed, “for this
brilliant success we congratulate the authorities of that great country and the INBA (National
Institute of Fine Arts), which so generously sponsored this spectacle. It will undoubtedly
bequeath many lessons for our choreographic circles.”\textsuperscript{16}

This initial bond the NBC and the INBA created appears to have levelled off as there was
spotty correspondence between 1958 to 1964. In 1962, the NBC reached out to the INBA,
requesting information about profit margins the NBC could realistically expect if they were to
perform in Mexico again. On September 7, 1962, Wilberto Canton of the Instituto Nacional de
Bellas Artes responded to the NBC, providing information about the profits other companies had
received in the last two years. He did not want to give the NBC an absolute number for their
company because he felt it was too risky on his part. Once again, the NBC and the INBA made
no further plans, but by 1963, the NBC had made serious arrangements for a tour to Mexico in
1964. The initiation of this tour is unknown as the first letter revealed that impresarios
representing the NBC and the INBA had come to an agreement that the NBC would tour for 15
days in March of 1964 at the Bellas Artes Theatre. This tour was ultimately cancelled because the
NBC could not secure enough funding as they had a low turnout and thus poor financial results in
their Fall 1963/64 season in the United States. Klaus W. Kolmer from the William Morris
Agency thought it best to postpone the tour until 1965. Neither the INBA or the NBC followed up
on this postponement in 1964, and it was not until 1965 that the institutions began discussing
plans again.

\textsuperscript{15} Sources could be missing, as all the behind-the-scenes documents for the 1958 tour were missing.
\textsuperscript{16} “Mexican Critic Hails Our National Ballet,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, June 14, 1958, ProQuest Historical
Newspaper.
During this second attempt, the NBC involved the Canadian government, but only because they ran into some problems. On September 24, 1965, Anthony Lawless, general manager of the NBC, requested a meeting with McCordick from the DEA within the Information Division to discuss issues they were having. While McCordick was out of the office, they were granted a meeting with Wallis, another individual in the Information Division of the DEA, on October 1, 1965. Their meeting prompted External Affairs to get in touch with the Canadian Ambassador to Mexico H.F Feaver to inform him about the upcoming performance. After receiving the news, Feaver wrote to the NBC, declaring he was “delighted to learn this week from the Department of External Affairs that the National Ballet plans to visit Mexico early next year. The Canadian Embassy will be more than pleased to cooperate with you in any way in which was can to make the tour here a success.” He further reveals that this was the first time the Embassy heard about the tour and that he “only wish[ed] that [the Embassy] had been informed of [the NBC’s] plans from their inception; we might have been able, for example, to help in avoiding the difficulties which caused the Department to telegraph to us on your behalf.”

Before the meeting and corresponding with Feaver, the NBC and the INBA had already begun discussing the prospects of a tour. And by June 24, 1965, Lawless had accepted a proposed tour to Mexico from February 18 to March 5 in 1966, consisting of eight performances in Mexico City and six to eight performances in other cities. The NBC was to receive a guaranteed amount of USD 27,500 for the engagement plus USD 3,600. However, it was issues with the “cost of permits; the need for 6 profile and 6 full face pictures for a visa in addition to a passport; and whether or not [they] would be allowed to bring [their] own Canadian doctor upon whom [they could] call at any time of the day or night in the event of any member of [the] company being stricken with ‘Mexican tummy’,” that prompted Lawless to contact External Affairs, which then

led the Ambassador and National Ballet to work together. In other words, the NBC and the INBA initially bypassed the Canadian government, choosing instead to explore the concept of a tour when opportunities presented themselves. And it was not until the NBC needed the DEA that the NBC contacted them. Feaver’s response also reveals that while the Embassy was delighted about the prospect of a tour, they wished that the NBC had involved state officials earlier.

For the Canadian government, cultural exchanges with Mexico were likely not a priority for the country. Diplomatic relations between Canada and Mexico were not very strong in the 1960s, mainly due to Ottawa’s focus elsewhere in Latin America and Europe. They were, however, on friendly terms. Canada and Mexico had only formalized diplomatic relations on January 12, 1944. From the Canadian perspective, the Second World War was a significant catalyst for this development. Mexico, however, was not Ottawa’s priority. Ottawa, in the 1940s, had given Brazil and Argentina priority and opened Canadian Embassies in 1941. Moreover, Canada had refused to be a part of the Pan American Union since 1910, as well as the Organizations of American States, which started in 1948. Arturo Santa-Cruz stated the “second refusal had to do in part with geopolitical issues: at the beginning of the Cold War, the United States had established itself not only as the hegemonic power of the Americas, but also of the two superpowers of world politics.” He further explained that “for Ottawa, the fledgling regional organization was an arena in which Washington would impose its designs on its weaker neighbors.” Despite Canada’s geographic distance from Mexico, the countries only started to develop closer relations in the 1950s. Most noticeable the first state visit by a Mexican president to Canada in October 1959. This visit was reciprocated by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker a few months later. These visits were aimed at promoting a relationship that was built

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20 Santa-Cruz, “Canada-Mexico Relations,” 403.
fundamentally on economic matters and their similar situation with the United States. The development of closer relations between Canada and Mexico, however, was not always a priority for the two governments. According to Santa-Cruz, “in the late 1960s, the aspiration to establish bilateral ties strong enough to balance those that both countries had with their common neighbor, seemed to languish.” Under these circumstances, it can be argued that the government did not seek out or promote exchanges to increase diplomatic relations, yet, neither did they discourage them. In order for exchanges to happen, non-state actors had to have both the aspiration and the means to make them happen. It is not surprising that even with the Canadian government’s approval of the engagement and the Ambassadors promise to help, the NBC had to cancel the tour.

2.2 Growing Frustrations

In December of 1965, the NBC announced its February 1966 tour was cancelled. The main reason for the cancellation was financial. To the public, the NBC claimed the reason for the cancellation was because “it had not been possible to arrange financial guarantees which would enable the company to maintain its standard of performance.” Behind-the-scenes, however, both Canadian and Mexican personnel largely attributed the financial problems to the Mexican impresario Quesada, who made last-minute changes to their agreements. Quesada wanted to reduce the original contract from USD 27,500 to USD 24,000 plus USD 3,600 for transportation because he could not fill all twelve performing days previously discussed. As a result, he did not believe it was possible to breakeven because “his local costs in connection with the Ballet [were] immense.” This reduction in fees, however, was not reasonable for the NBC, who believed they were already going to be taking a financial loss of $61,000.00 by touring the United State and

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21 Santa-Cruz, “Canada-Mexico Relations,” 403.
Mexico based on the expected revenue versus what they budgeted.²⁴ With the cut, the calculated loss became $72,000.00 in the first projections. It was later disclosed to the Canada Council the loss was going to be $100,000.00. It was, as a result, not feasible for the company to go ahead with the plan. In a report to the Canada Council in 1966, John Wilson, general manager of the NBC, declared, “it was not a question of just playing safe, it was a matter of survival.”²⁵

Following this second cancellation, there was a growing frustration on both the Canadian and Mexican side of the exchanges. Lawless voiced the NBC frustration to Klaus Kolmer, writing, “I think it is a d—n shame the way we have been dealt with over Mexico… You know that if we cancel this Mexican tour, we could have to cancel the whole U.S tour. We naturally cannot afford the repercussions that this would bring.”²⁶ Cancelling meant that the company had seven weeks in which the dancers were under contract and had nothing to do, while also missing out on the opportunity to receive international exposure.²⁷ The latter issue was a considerable problem in the NBC’s quest for greatness. The Canada Council believed strongly that national success was only possible if the artist had world-class standards. In the first annual report produced by the Canada Council, it stated, “one result of Canada’s close relations with Britain, France and the United States is that for a Canadian to achieve success on a national scale, he must have world-scale standards.”²⁸ This belief was influential in the Councils’ decisions as they reserved financial support for art organizations that gained this standard. In the Canada Council Act, it declared that:

Assistance for performance abroad should be given only to artists and organizations whose standards compare well with the best in other countries.

²⁴ It is unclear if this lost is calculated in Canadian dollars or U.S. dollars. I have specific when that information is provided.
²⁷ John Wilson to The Canada Council, 10 February 1966.
²⁸ First Annual report of the Canada Council, to 31 March 1958, 22.
Substantial assistance should be given to the two or three leading organizations in the country having world standards to enable them to reach more people and to stimulate improvement in standards of performance and appreciation.  

Therefore, the cancellation prevented the NBC from continuing to build its international reputation. For Franca, this was a concern. Reflecting on the early development of the company, Franca wrote, “there were many times when it seemed, despite all we managed to accomplish, that the company’s progress towards international standards was frustratingly slow.” Franca also recognized that critics and members of grant-giving bodies shared in this frustration.

At the Council, the NBC was considered the favoured company because there was a belief that Toronto was the ideal place to develop a national ballet. As Doolittle and Flynn argued, studying dance through a post-colonial theory, “nation/region binaries matched high/low or elite/popular culture binaries and formed the unspoken premise in policies that shaped arts production. Thus, artistic work produced in the national centres tended to be seen as high and elite and therefore fundable, while artistic work produced in the ‘regions’ tended to be seen as low or popular and therefore unworthy of federal support.” Despite this, the NBC had almost lost its funding four years prior because of criticism from abroad. In 1962, the Canada Council commissioned the Ballet Survey by Kirstein and Buckle to help determine whether it should fund one or all of the ballet companies. This question arose as the Council had become concerned with all the ballet companies’ financial instability, regionalism, and artistic experiences. According to dance scholar Katherine Cornell, the survey had a profound effect on Canada, even though the Council never took action on the recommendations and it was not published; it established a standard grant pattern of 50 percent to the National Ballet, and 25 percent to both the RWB and

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30 Bell and Franca, National Ballet of Canada, 216.
31 Bell and Franca, National Ballet of Canada, 216.
the LGBC. While the National Ballet received the majority of funding, the Kirstein and Buckle were not particularly fond of the National Ballet as they “proclaimed [the company] inadequate and dowdy.” In other words, the experts did not believe the NBC could reach an international standard. Kirstein recommended that the Council should cut off funding to all three companies. Despite the fact that the negative criticism was never made public, Franca recognized that negative criticism from abroad voiced to the Canada Council could affect the growth of the company. Amidst the Kirstein and Buckle investigation, the NBC’s board attempted to offset the disapproval by soliciting “the opinion of British journalist A.V. Coton of Dance and Dance magazine on both the National Ballet and the Royal Winnipeg, to reassert that the National Ballet maintained international standards.” While the NBC emerged from this period as the victor in the sense that they received the most annual payments, the Council still reserved the right to evaluate the stature and artistic merit of the companies individually and the NBC failed to secure additional funding for travel in the year following the survey.

Personnel in the NBC discussed how individuals in Mexico were also becoming frustrated with the failures to successfully execute a tour. Nora Woods, comptroller of the National Ballet of Canada, wrote in an interdepartmental memo on May 6, 1966:

I had a telephone call from Bev Wilson, former assistant stage manager who has just returned from Mexico. Bev is a very good personal friend of the manager at the Belles arts theatre in Mexico. She tells me that, according to mister Antonio Lopez Mancera, the director of the Department of Cultural Affairs of Mexico is most anxious to have the National Ballet for a six-week season or session. They could take us perhaps in December 1966 or June July 1967. They were very upset at the way the

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impresario bungled the tour this year and feel that they want to deal directly with us to get the ball rolling.37

As this information comes via word of mouth, the level of anxiety and frustration on the part of the Department of Cultural Affairs is unclear. No direct sources refer to this anxiety, and Antonio Lopez Mancera did not use a concerned tone in a subsequent letter to the NBC. However, Mancera did negotiate directly with the NBC for the majority of the following negotiations, except when discussing publicity. He appointed Oscar Ledesma, Departamento Técnico de Espectáculos of Palacio de Bellas Artes, to be the company’s representative. This direct contact reveals that Mancera had been somewhat frustrated with the failures and wanted the NBC to perform in Mexico.

The Mexican government’s perspective on developing ties with Canada may provide some insight into the Mexican Cultural Affairs’ frustrations. While Canada set its sights on Latin American to expand its role in the hemisphere during the Second World War, Mexico became “considerabl[y] interested in expanding relations” because of its “historical perception of its own importance in the hemisphere as a leader of the other Latin American states.”38 According to Stephen Randall, “Mexico has historically taken considerable initiative not only within the inter-American system, by opposing the United States on critical issues at times, but also seeking advantage in becoming closer with the U.S.’s northern neighbour, whether during World War II or more recently in the trilateral trade discussion.”39 Therefore, Canada’s focus on Brazil and Argentina thwarted Mexico’s desire to be a leader of Latin America. One could speculate that the Mexican government wanted to develop a relationship through culture. This dynamic was hinted at in the press surrounding the NBC 1958 tour to Mexico. In EL UNIVERSAL: El Gran

37 Nora Woods to John Wilson, 6 May 1966, National Ballet of Canada Archives, 40, 4020-H Mexico Engagements, Mexico 1967-68.
Diario De Mexico, Armando Valdes Peza and Puck wrote “the boxes were occupied by ambassadors of every European country. No South or Central American diplomat was seen.” Unfortunately, the last few sentences of this article are unclear due to how it was stored, but nonetheless, specifying that there were no South or Central American diplomats in the newspapers is significant particularly considering newspapers at this time was essentially government sponsored. It indicates that Mexican officials seemed to be pleased in being able to build relations with Canadians in the hope of building relationships with other governments without the South or Central America diplomats to interfere.

The 1958 tour corresponded with significant progress in Mexican-Canadian relations. While it is impossible to know if there is direct influence between the ballet exchange and state relations, it seems quite significant that Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Sidney Smith travelled to Mexico on an official visit in 1958, and in the following year, the Mexican President travelled to Canada for three days, in which President Lopez Mateos expressed, at the beginning of his trip, that the “main objective was to ‘increase relations between Mexico and Canada’.” It was reported that President Mateos, Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and other foreign officials “stayed largely on trade topics,” discussing a Latin American free trade agreement, the prospects of Canada joining the Organization of American States, and a “common zinc export policy.” Prime Minister Diefenbaker reciprocated the visit by travelling to Mexico in April 1960. Prior to the visit, Globe and Mail, reported that “there can be no doubt that he was also motivated by a desire for a first-hand look, however, brief and circumscribed, at Latin America,

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41 Antonio Luna Arroyo (ed.), La nueva política international de México. Documentos para la historia de un Gobierno, 21 (México City, Editorial La Justicia, 1959), 231, in quoted, Santa-Cruz, “Canada-Mexico Relations,” 403. Translated by Santa-Cruz
which is destined to play an increasingly important role in world affairs.”

During this visit, Prime Minister Diefenbaker remarked that he was “impressed by Mexico’s friendliness towards Canada and her desire to increase cultural and trade relations.” He further noted that these relations would expand through negotiating a “sale of steel rails to the Mexican national railway” and in an exchange of “500 Mexican student enrolled in Canadian educational institutions and a growing number of Canadian scholars going to Mexico.” Despite interest in expanding trade relations, particularly from the Mexican perspective, following these state visits, relationship-building progress was stunted. For example, Howard Green, Canada’s Secretary of State for External Affairs, did not include Mexico in his 1960 Latin American tour. Therefore, the frustrations of the Cultural Affairs of Mexico and the INBA with the cancellations were possibly because it was representative of government relations with Canada, and they recognized the power in cultural exchanges between the two nations.

In light of these frustrations, it is also important to understand why ballet may have been used to develop this relationship between the two countries. Ballet represented a commonality between cultures. Mexico and Canada’s cultures overlapped insofar as Europeanized culture was strongly tied to each nation’s idea of their place in modernity. Much of Mexico’s cultural identity was blended with that of Europe. Prior to the Mexican revolution, the elites saw European cultural and artistic expression as the “standards of modernity and progress.” This idea of modern was held on to in the post-revolutionary period. As Jose Luis Reynosos argued, Mexican elites used ballet, and more specifically Russian ballet star Anna Pavlova’s performance in 1919 to construct a social space that “functioned to preserve the status quo and where a class of

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43 “Mr. Diefenbaker’s Travels,” The Globe and Mail, December 21, 1959, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
44 “Mexican Visit To Bring More Trade, Dief Hopes,” Toronto Daily Star, April 25, 1960, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
45 “Mexican Visit To Bring More Trade, Dief Hopes,” Toronto Daily Star.
Reynosos, further, argued that the revolutionary nationalist Mexicans were also drawn to ballet for its “universal essence.” However, “they wanted to develop a form of expressive culture that could still have universal appeal but that it could also express their unique identity as Mexicans.” According to Reynosos, Pavlova’s re-choreography of a folk dance, out of interest and admiration of Mexican folk and popular culture, contributed to this development of concert dance in Mexico and new modernity because she operated from a privileged position while embodying a Mexican persona. This second modernity became more cemented as the twentieth century went along, with the institutionalization of folkloric in Mexico. However, despite the different construction of modernity in Mexico, ballet and Europeanized culture were intertwined with the construction of Mexican national identity in a similar manner as they were in Canada. Both countries’ cultures grew out of Eurocentric notions of modernity. Therefore, sharing this cultural origin, ballet could have been seen as a way to emphasize the believed shared values and unify the two countries.

Interestingly, during the 1958 performances by the NBC, Mexican critics focused on similar aspects of dances as did elite Mexican critics in 1919 during Pavlova’s rendition of Russian modern ballets. In both performances, elite critics focused on the fusion of the “the three sisters’ of dance, music and scenography.” In 1919, the praise of the fusion of these arts was reserved for modern and original ballet created by Russians, which in the eye of the Mexican elites were works by Borodin and Tchaikovsky. According to Reynosos, this “embodied fusion reflected the prevalent desire among the Mexican elites to unify forces in the construction of a more culturally sophisticated and more economically developed modern nation. Also, the

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unification of these three arts as constitutive of the modern reflected the unification of the allied nations orchestrating through the League of Nations, the post-WWI new world order that México was eager to join.”52 In 1958, when discussing the NBC performances, particularly for *Swan Lake*, a Tchaikovsky ballet, critics commented on the quality of these arts. For example, in an article, R. Burgos discussed the ballerinas dancing: “The beauty of Lois Smith was noticeable in her various interventions, with her refined technique and supreme elegance.”53 Burgos also noted the important of the scenography and conductor: “Equally important, the scenography was one of the main attractions of the night. The orchestra led by George Crum achieved a lot of performance and adaptability with the artists.”54 Burgos was not the only one. It was the theme throughout approximately 20 articles. While these comments do not focus on the fusion of the arts, and *Swan Lake* was not an original piece for the NBC, and thus direct parallels are impossible, it does leaves one to wonder whether the interest of Mexican officials and elites in Canadian ballet was a reflection of a similar desire for closer relations with Canada. This question is particularly apparent when one considers how President Mateos noticed shared values and diplomatic strategies between the countries. During his first state visit he detailed:

> The Mexican and Canadian people every day improve their mutual approximation, encouraged by their shared ideals and the similarity of its purposes. Proof of this is the frequency with which we have agreed to the defense of the same theses within the United Nations, where the attachment of both countries to freedom has become apparent.55

54 R. Burgos, “Pentagrama Musical.”
55 Government of Mexico, Presencia Internacional de Adolfo López Mateos, Mexico City (Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1963), 76, quoted in Santa-Cruz, “Canada-Mexico Relations,” 403. Translated by Santa-Cruz.
2.3 Turning Point: “for the greater importance of Canada” and more co-operation

Due to growing frustration with the ongoing inability to stage a second tour, both the INBA and the NBC made significant changes in how they interacted with each other that laid a foundation for a successful tour. Firstly, negotiations became more personal and direct. Both the NBC and INBA cut off the impresarios from the bulk of mediations. After hearing that Mancera wanted to deal with them directly, Woods encouraged Franca to vacation in Mexico, to “talk with the people concerned and see if we can make anything out of it.”56 The company even discussed paying for part of Franca’s expenses. Franca agreed to this, and they set a meeting for May 22nd. While this meeting was being planned, the new general manager for the NBC, John H. Wilson, made a conscious decision to schedule a tour with as little influence from their impresarios as possible. He realized he could not completely circumvent their agents, as “the William Morris Agency [would] have to handle the final details of this engagement.” Yet he wanted “to have all the basic details worked out so [Klaus Kolmar]… only [had] to settle the final contract.”57 This decision became the norm even when Wallace Russell replaced Wilson the following year.

This shift to direct relations resulted in the NBC being able to take control of the narrative and make a decision for themselves. As a result, the NBC started emphasizing the tour’s importance to Canada as well as positioning itself as representing Canada. This positioning was not uncommon for the NBC. Allana Lindgren argued that in efforts to popularize and legitimize ballet in Canada during the 1950s and 1960s, Franca used the dancers’ bodies to demonstrate “that the National Ballet could function as a propaganda agenda for the government.”58 To do this, Franca included “several photographs from a tour to Washington, DC [in the Company’s 1956-1957 souvenir program]. Among the photographs, Arnold Heeney, Canada’s ambassador to the United States, chats with [Lois] Smith and [David] Adams after a performance of Swan Lake.

56 Woods to Wilson, 6 May 1966.
Lilian Jarvis, dressed in a tutu, poses with two Mounties outside of the Canadian Embassy.”

This imagery continued in the Company’s 1959-60 souvenir programme and included images of dancers posing outside of the Museo Nacional de Historia during their first tour to Mexico City.

In a similar manner to this nationalistic imagery, Wilson shifted the language used in negotiating, to position the tour as “important for Canada.” This shift was most evident in his conversation with Alec Walton, whose job title is unknown, regarding transportation. From the beginning, transportation to and around Mexico had been a significant issue. It was one of the most expensive and logistically challenging parts of planning a tour. One of the main problems was whether Canadian buses could enter Mexico. During this third time negotiating a trip, Wilson reached out to Walton with a request for financial help in getting to Mexico in hopes to prevent the NBC from losing money for the engagement. He estimated that transportation could cost up to $20 000, and he felt that this cost was a stumbling block. At the end of the letter, he made a plea to Walton, as a Canadian, for help: “Both Miss Franca and myself feel that a Mexican engagement this season would be very desirable, both from a morale-building viewpoint for the Company and as an important engagement as far as Canada would be concerned. The theatre in Mexico City is of a nature that would allow us to present all our major productions, and certainly, we would definitely realize some international publicity.”

While there is no response and it is unclear whether Walton helped the company, the shift in tone is significant as it is a sign that during these negotiations, the NBC wanted to connect its interest with the interest of Canada.

In keeping with its interest in high European culture, the Canada government endorsed art forms with a British heritage. Doolittle and Flynn have argued that “a post-colonial obsession with the creation of the ‘mother’ culture (Britain) was evident in the establishment of richly endowed ‘national’ performing arts entities like the Stratford Festival, which featured imported

British artistic directors producing British plays…”^63 Canada also wanted to be seen as a mature nation. For the Canada Council, “there is no place for what may be called “the little Canadian” either in the sense of glorifying what Canadians do because they are Canadian or belittling anything done for the same reason. Canada becomes every day a more mature nation and she can afford to take an adult attitude – accepting freely, using, and working with what is English, French or American (or anything else) because it is good and not simply because it comes to us from abroad.”^62

The National Ballet saw itself and the tour as able to fulfill these desires. Being a ballet company, the NBC could easily connect to Canada’s affinity with highbrow culture, as ballet was considered in Canada, and the world, to be an elite art form. However, Franca’s vision for the NBC further allowed the company to perceive itself as embodying Canada’s desires. From inception, Franca wanted her company to model after Sadler’s Wells Ballet (now Royal Ballet) in London, where she had once taught. This structure included producing the classical ballets that emerged out of Europe and Russia, such as Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, the Nutcracker, and La Sylphide. In specifying that Mexico City had venues large enough to “present all our major production,” the NBC was subtly informing Walton that Mexico City allowed the NBC to show the world that Canada was producing quality European work because they would perform European ballets that required “proper” sized stages.

Ensuring governmental support for the tour was also essential to the NBC going forward. In 1967, the ambassadorship changed in the middle of the consolidation of the tour plans. Thus, without Feaver, who had cultivated a relationship with the NBC and spoke positively about a potential tour in 1965, the company worked hard to make sure Dwight Fulford, the new ambassador, would provide the same support. During the changeover to the new ambassador, Wilson reported to company members that he told Feaver that he expected Dwight Fulford to host

62 First Annual report of the Canada Council, to 31 March 1958, 22.
“an opening night party and also [Wilson] wanted the Embassy to support the engagement.”63 In asking for support, the NBC once again showed their desire to connect their performances to the “importance of Canada.” In addition, the NBC was requesting that they represent Canada, as opposed to, the government asking the company to represent Canada. This request for support, however, was not immediately granted. According to Wilson, Feaver said, “Mr. Fulford could not agree to anything, but he felt that the new ambassador would agree to give a party.”64 This decision prompted Johnson Ashely, company manager, to write to Fulford to ask how the company should proceed to get approval for the performance: “I understand that it will be necessary for me to get authority for the Ballet to perform in Mexico. I would be very grateful to learn what procedure and through what authorities I would have to go.”65 The outcome of Ashely’s question is unknown; however, the interaction reveals that while the NBC worked to create an opportunity for a tour, they believed that the government had to sign off on the cultural exchange and, by extension, the image the company chose to present. Thus, making the tour a political endeavour that the NBC was willing to participate in.

A month before the company was to travel to Mexico, the NBC was even more direct in presenting that tour as being Canadian sanctioned. In working through questions on publicity, the INBA requested interviews with soloists in TV studios and a promotional videotape of the performances. The NBC was, however, bound by the Canada Actors’ Equity Association guidelines for workplace conditions. Thus, payment to the dancers was an issue because promotion work was seen as additional labour, requiring additional fees to the dancers. Therefore, the company needed to request permission not to have to pay their dancers for the publicity. To get around the financial issues for promotional work, the NBC was instructed by Equity to “write

a letter to them stating clause #VI, page 13 (overseas rider) and say that this tour is being done through the arrangement of the Department of External Affairs and that [the videotape] shall be telecast and… used for publicity purposes only and the National Ballet Guild of Canada will receive no specific payment for the telecast, then there is a very good chance it will be allowed free of charge.”

Wood followed through with this action by writing to Equity on behalf of the company saying, “we have been officially invited by the Mexican Government through the Canadian Department of External Affairs.” This declaration, however, was not reflected elsewhere—in no other documentation does it say that the Mexican Government invited the National Ballet through the Canadian DEA. There were also no conversations about the company’s tour was a part of the Olympics’ cultural events with the NBC. Potentially, this reference to the Canadian DEA was exaggerated insofar as the company received approval from the Embassy to perform in Mexico, and the company chose to believe this formality as official support from External Affairs. However, what is clear is that the NBC used the potential connection to Canadian External Affairs as leverage to get what they wanted (materially) and present the tour as a Canadian brand.

While the cancellation in 1965 led to the NBC building a perception that the tour was for the Canadian government—particularly when negotiating with Canadian agencies—conversation with the INBA also changed. The NBC became relatively more co-operative with the INBA personnel and recognized the importance of the collaboration between the two institutions. Once again, money was a significant point of conflict, and similarly, as with the unexpected pay cut that the previous Mexican impresario presented to the NBC, the company was thrown a financial

68 I do not have access to the Department of External Affairs. Thus, it is unclear whether there were behind-the-scenes discussions on Canada participation in the cultural event in Mexico and if the NBC would be a part of Canada’s presentation. However, there is no mention of the Olympics in the NBC documents or discussion with INBA.
curveball. In the latter half of 1967, Mancera appointed Oscar Ledesma as their representative for
the promotion and publicity of the performance outside Mexico City. He charged a fifteen percent
fee from all of the guarantees from performances. This fee was problematic as the NBC was
already under contract with William Morris Agency, who the NBC paid ten percent of their
earnings for making the bookings. To mediate this new challenge and not lose too much money,
the NBC worked with Kolmar of the William Morris Agency and Ledesma to come to an
agreement that worked for both sides. However, the NBC seemed inclined to support Ledesma’s
wishes. On Oct 10, 1967, Russell wrote to Klaus Kolmar, confirming that Kolmar was willing to
reduce his fee by five percent for the performances outside of Mexico City, while they would
give Ledesma the full fifteen percent he requested. But in addition to this request, Russell also
asked if Kolmar was willing to split the fee for Mexico City with Ledesma because Ledesma also
“wishes to represent us in Mexico City, claiming that if we are to be successful, we need
representation for publicity purposes.” In this request, Russell pleaded with Kolmar to recognize
the importance of the tour for the company. Russell wrote:

Since this is an important engagement for us and there exists the
possibility of playing there in the future, we are wondering what
your thoughts would be about offering to split your fee in
Mexico City with him as well. I certainly am aware of all the
work that you do for us, and the small fees that you get are
hardly worth it for you, but I am nervous about not having some
local help in Mexico.69

In effect, the NBC put its relationship with the INBA first, even over an agency responsible for
the NBC’s successful tours to the United States for over ten years, in the hopes of building a
relationship with Ledesma and INBA and ensuring a successful tour. The latter reason is
particularly important because progression to an international standard was not only reliant on

69 Wallace Russell to Klaus Kolmar, 13 October 1967, National Ballet of Canada Archives, 40, 4020-H
exposure, but it also had to be positive. And as Ledesma was responsible for promotion and publicity, it was essential to have him helping the NBC.

2.4 Arriving in Mexico: healthy dancers are essential and “you are ambassadors”

After a number of years negotiating, the INBA and the NBC finally signed a contract on January 12, 1968. The NBC was set to perform at Bellas Artes Palace in Mexico City from February 6th to 20th and in Jalapa and Guadalajara from February 21st to 27th. The NBC was to receive a $2000.00 guarantee pre-performance. In addition, after INBA deducted expenses for publicity and payment of the orchestras, the INBA was to give the NBC thirty percent of the remaining gross earnings. They agreed that the NBC would perform Romeo and Juliet, Swan Lake, Les Sylphides, Solitaire, Nutcracker Act 2, Lilac Garden, The Corsair, Don Quixote pas de deux and Concerto Barocco. And finally, the NBC was responsible for the living expenses, sustenance and fares of its personnel, while INBA would handle the courtesy visa and customs transactions and stage equipment.

While the contract was signed and the logistics arranged, the NBC continued to be concerned about international opinions. The health of the dancers was a critical concern for Franca as illnesses from the altitude, temperature, and water threatened the company’s ability to gain positive receptions in Mexico, which they wanted in order to achieve world-class perception of the company. The concern stemmed from Franca’s experience in 1958. Reflecting on the 1958 tour to Mexico, Franca indicated that the gruelling tour schedule and illness prevented the company from doing their best. She wrote about the company’s experience:

Lois, David, Earl, Angela, Lilian, Judy, Grant, and many of the original gang were still together and we did our best, when not suffering from Montezuma’s revenge, to survive twenty-six performances in twenty-two days. This schedule was very hard-going, for we had not reckoned on the extra effort needed to dance at the high altitude of Mexico City… At the end of one performance of Winter Night, when I had to be on stage for thirty minutes with only a one-minute break in the wings, I knelt down to curtsey and just kept ongoing. I came to in the arms of two
hug the firemen – they were stationed in the wings to administer oxygen – as they carried me to my dressing room…

According to Franca, these issues contributed to the company’s stunted development in the 1960s as the NBC’s only other international engagement was in 1966 when a small group of the company went for the International Ballet Competition at Varna, Bulgaria.

Franca was not completely wrong to see illness as a concern. Overall, the company had received good reviews by both Canada and Mexico newspapers during their 1958 tour. In Mexico, the majority of the news reports talked about the positive audience reception. They also noted Franca’s excellent choice of repertoire, the dancers’ superior technique, and captivating beauty of the ballerinas. When Mexico reporters did critique the performances, it was regarding the NBC “lack[ing] enough lead figures to allow cast changes to add interest without compromising quality.” However, a couple of English written articles mentioned the company’s struggle with the altitude. One reporter, Kathleen Rex, noted that the dancers did not rest for the recommended 36 hours when first arriving in Mexico. More directly, and damaging in Franca’s eyes, was an article in Time: The Weekly News Magazine that outlined the NBC’s struggles in the first performances:

One of the things a good ballet dancer is not supposed to do is huff and puff openly during a pas de deux no matter how

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70 Bell and Franca, National Ballet of Canada, 230.
71 A number of the passages mention the audience’s receptions to the performance: “Applauses confirmed the brilliant success of the Ballet of Canada”; R. Burgos, “Pentagrama Musical,” Jueves de Excelsior, National Ballet of Canada Archives, 37, Clippings 1958 Temporary, 1958 Mexico; “The audience applauded this ballet in which the extraordinary homogeneity of the group was shown in relief, causing a wonderful impression”; “Noche de Invierno’y ‘Premiere de Gala,’ Dos Brillantes Estrenos del Ballet del Canada,” El Universal Grafico, National Ballet of Canada Archives, 37, Clippings 1958 Temporary, 1958 Mexico. Translated by Dairon Morejon Peez
73 “Danza,” NOVEDADES: Mexico En La Cultura, June, 1958, National Ballet of Canada Archives, 37, Clippings 1958 Temporary, 1958 Mexico. Translated by Dairon Morejon Peez
strenuous. For the youthful, well-trained members of Canada’s National Ballet, this was no problem until they began warming up for their opening at Mexico City’s Palacio de Bellas Artes. Suddenly all 35 dancers in the troupe were hit by the thin 7,500 ft high atmosphere. Bellas Artes’ managers had the answer: they installed oxygen tanks for the artists to puff on between scenes.75

According to this reporter, the oxygen tanks solved the problem, and the company went on to gain audience approval. However, the American magazine presented the image of unhealthy dancers. The reporter questioned the standard of the dancers by noting that they did one of the things “good ballet dancers are not supposed to” by huffing and puffing openly. And the reporter made this critique for the very audience that Franca needed to win over: the American critics.

As such, the concern for the dancers’ health was spoken about throughout the negotiations for a return visit. In a letter to Ambassador H.F Feaver on October 18, 1965, Anthony Lawless raised the question about bringing their own Canadian doctor to help deal with any health issues while in Mexico.76 Feaver responded by saying it was possible. However, the Canadian doctor might not have access to medications, and to ask the Mexican authority could cause embarrassment because the Mexican authorities were sensitive to complaints of “Mexican tummy.” In preparation to travel, Franca sent a fact and recommendation sheet, in which she provided information about Mexico, such as the temperatures and altitude, to all the dancers and employees going on the tour. A large portion of the sheet commented on maintaining the health of their dancers. Firstly, it advised that the dancers not obtain second-rate accommodations to save money because Franca feared that they would be exposed to “conditions that may seriously affect [their] health” without access to a reliable doctor.77 The sheet further told the dancers that they were required to take Entero-Vioform pills “to fight against ‘Turista’ (tummy trouble)” and

76 Anthony Lawless to H.F Feaver Ambassador, 18 October 1965.
that the organizers would make Kaopectate and oxygen available to the dancers during the performances if they were to get the “trots” or have trouble breathing.78 These were all precautions made for the company to avoid putting on a poor performance.

The fact sheet also provided a recommendation on how the dancers should conduct themselves while abroad. The document unabashedly stated, “remember that you are ambassadors of Canada in a foreign country. You should dress and act accordingly.”79 While being ambassadors of Canada was informal and never officially recognized by the Canadian government, Franca took it upon herself to ensure that dancers and company members embodied dominant Canadian ideologies. And thus, ultimately, presenting the company as working for Canadian and trusted national organizations. This decision was similar to how Franca worked to legitimize and popularize “ballet by using the bodies of dancers as pliable conduits for a variety of narratives that equated the Company with mainstream culture and promoted theatrical dance as an unthreatening art form in support of dominant ideologies.”80 In Mexico, Franca’s “Canadian ambassadors” were to embody modesty and respectability. Franca generally recommended members to wear “cosmopolitan apparel, light or medium-weight business suits and dresses.”81 In public, Franca expected them to “appear clean, neat and unobtrusive” at all times.82 These expectations were gendered as the instruction continued by differentiating recommendations for males and females. Women were told not to wear slacks or shorts on the streets. The fact sheet stated that mini-skirts could not be worn during the day, claiming if the dancers were to wear “mini-skirts and decorative stocking [they may] well be molested.”83 Wearing mini-skirts in the evening, however, was fine, if the dancer had an escort. Finally, Franca instructed women to never go out in the dark alone. The male dancers, on the other hand, were told not to dress like

78 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
79 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
81 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
82 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
83 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
hippies, even though “hippies are a curiosity in Mexico,” and told to get a haircut before leaving Canada if they did not “already have a reasonable” style.\textsuperscript{84}

2.5 Trajectory of the Company: Was the NBC successful?

Following the NBC’s tour to Mexico in 1968, international engagements were few and far between in part because the company was constantly faced with financial issues, and in part due to the size of the company. Franca observed that touring to Mexico with a full-sized company was an expensive undertaking for international recognition, writing, “taking the entire company overseas was a costly way of achieving some international recognition…”\textsuperscript{85} However, taking the entire company abroad to Mexico in 1968 could be seen as a trial for the company since, four years later, DEA funded their tour to Europe for their European debut. This debut was long-awaited, involved the full company, and was a major step in Franca’s desires and goals for the company. For Franca, a European tour was the pinnacle of success for a company as the praise helped cement the NBC’s international reputation (discussed in more detail in chapter four). As such, the 1968 Mexico tour can be seen as opening doors for the company on their journey to international and national success.

2.6 Conclusion

In short, cultural exchanges for the National Ballet of Canada were integrated in Canadian arts and politics insofar as showcasing their artistic abilities internationally was vital to achieve national success under the Canada Council’s stipulations: a goal Celia Franca worked towards from the inception of the company. As a result, performing abroad was a main focal point for the NBC. They reached out to the INBA following their 1958 engagement in Mexico City in hopes of continuing to demonstrate their artistic growth. However, Canadian cultural exchanges required a level of support from the government, which was difficult to secure if the

\textsuperscript{84} Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
\textsuperscript{85} Bell and Franca, \textit{National Ballet of Canada}, 232
company did not have national success in the eyes of the Council. As a result, the NBC was caught in between the need for international success to be worthy for tours abroad and needing tours abroad to gain international success. As such, the NBC promoted itself as a functionary for the government in an effort to achieve their aims. They did this by emphasizing that their British image connected to national interests by presenting a high-class culture and mature nation and showing that the NBC dancers embodied Canadian ideologies of respectability and modesty. Through these tactics, the NBC were encouraging officials to think of the company as ambassadors of Canada: a desire the Council expressed when investigating the probability of having a single national company. And therefore, they were producing opportunities for themselves to be perceived by the Canadian government as having a value internationally.

Exchanges specifically with Mexico were possible because Mexican elites and officials wanted and encouraged exchanges with the NBC and Canada. However, for the NBC, engaging in cultural exchanges with Mexico was not the end game. Franca proclaimed to the dancers, “IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THE YOU ARE IN MEXICO TO REPRESENT CANADA’S NATIONAL BALLET AT ITS BEST, NOT AS TOURISTS TO SEE THE SIGHTS” [emphasis hers]. Further, all throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the NBC had been reaching out to other Latin America and Caribbean countries to plan tours. All attempts failed. While less is known about the INBA’s motives, it appears an exchange with the NBC was politically driven as the Mexican Government officials saw cultural exchanges as an alternate way of building diplomatic relations with Canada because of the Europeanized culture that linked Canada and Mexico. As a result, the INBA was enthusiastic about the prospects of presenting the NBC in Mexico and took steps, such as developing direct relations with the NBC, to ensure the tour would happen. As

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87 Facts and Recommendation, Season 1967-68.
88 In the National Ballet of Canada Archive, there were records of the company briefly discussing a tour to South America. In 1964, they had made serious plans with Jamaica officials for a tour after the RWB’s successful tour during Jamaica’s independence celebration.
89 More research needs to be done on this.
such, the INBA’s pressures and desires for the company to perform in their country were essential to the NBC attaining a tour internationally and thereby world-class standards.
Chapter 3

“A Goodwill Mission from Canada:” The Royal Winnipeg Ballet Helps Celebrate Jamaica’s Independence

“The stage was built in the center of the stadium, and our dressing rooms were up about four flights of stairs open to the sky, where we changed, ran down, danced, ran up, changed, ran down, danced [laughs]. And it was hot, and we said simply ‘we can’t perform in this heat,’ so they delayed the performance for some time; I don’t remember maybe half an hour, an hour, to some time, the sun disappeared. And of course, there was no backdrop, wings or lighting available. It was just a blank stage. So that was very limiting. And, yeah, we got through it, but yeah, we did see some spiders in washrooms. Quite different from dry Winnipeg.” – Marilyn Young-Marshall, RWB principal dancer, 1963

On January 12, 1963, Marilyn Young-Marshall and her fellow RWB members stepped off the airplane and were greeted by intense heat and friendly faces as they embarked on their first tour outside of North America to help celebrate Jamaica’s independence. The following ten days were filled with numerous performances and tourist activities as they toured the island, seemingly building ties with Jamaica. Newspapers and media outlets labelled the exchange as a goodwill mission. The Star newspaper in Jamaica wrote, “Canada’s most honoured dance company and one of the two ‘Royal’ ballet companies in the world, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, was conceived and is being presented as a cultural and goodwill mission from Canada – one of the oldest Dominions of the Commonwealth in tribute to Jamaica’s recent attainment of Independence status.”¹ A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) video, “Ballet in Jamaica,” for the 20/20 series, also declared the tour as a goodwill journey. Under this guise, sending the Royal Winnipeg Ballet made sense, as with independence, Jamaica was entering the

¹ “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” Star, January 8, 1963, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives.
Commonwealth, and thus, the RWB represented a commonality in the countries’ relations. However, the realities of the tour for the organizers and dancers were not always as they appeared. While the media orchestrated a friendship narrative for the tour drawn from the countries’ statuses in the Commonwealth, the reality behind-the-scenes was that private institutions were heavily involved, and the dancers had their own personal motivations. Therefore, this chapter explores non-state actors’ roles, realities, and experiences in carrying out state interests. Why does one lean into national interests? What are the underlying reasons? This approach aims to give voice to those who are often viewed as passive in ballet exchanges because they do not participate in making decisions.

During the tour, the dancers were busy. While in Jamaica, they performed six times in Ward Theatre, located in the country’s capital, and once in Mandeville. For their farewell performances, they also held two shows at Independence Park, the national stadium, which was built for the British and Commonwealth games in 1966. One of these performances was a matinee for approximately 15,000 to 20,000 school children, organized by the Minister of Education—an impressive sized audience for the ballet world. The dancers interviewed talked about the remarkable visual of seeing that many children in the stadium. However, performing was not the only activity the dancers were required to do. The tour organizers also planned for the dancers to attend a reception and explore different parts of the island to learn about the island’s history, economy, and tourism. For example, they went to Fort Charles, the Alcan Jamaica Ltd. bauxite mine, the Caymanas Estates sugarcane plantation and Dunn’s River Falls. These activities helped promote the island and the political and social relationship between the two Commonwealth countries; however, they were partly designed by the private sector in accordance with their own economic interests.

2 Press Release n.d. received orally by interviewee 02. There are a number of different reports stating contradictory numbers.
Unique to this tour was extensive and particular media coverage. While normally a few print media journalists attended the events to relay the goings on for the public, the Jamaica tour also had a film crew with them. The CBC sent three men: Peter Kelly, leader, Messer Harry Makin, cameraman, and Bruce Young, sound engineer, to Jamaica “to shoot the ballet against the local background.”3 The CBC video, “Ballet in Jamaica,” which was 30 minutes in length, was released nationwide on the Canadian 20/20 television series on March 31, 1963. This series only lasted from April 22, 1962 to September 24, 1967 and offered a wide range of documentaries on Canadian life, including sports, regions, or historical accounts. “Ballet in Jamaica” provided the Canadian public insight to the Canadian ballet and Jamaica’s history and culture by showing the dancers arriving in Jamaica, attending a reception, visiting the tourist and the major economic industries sites, and performing and rehearsing. All through this video, the dancers appears as if they are the ideal non-state actors as they are shown smiling and enjoying themselves as they interacted with Jamaican citizens and the land. However, when one analyzes the tour from the dancer’s perspective, a different narrative emerges; one that considers the dancers’ motivations and emotions throughout the tour. For the dancers, taking part in these “extra” activities was not driven by national interests, but rather loyalty to the ballet company and getting the most out of the tour for themselves. Thus, this chapter argues that in addition to public and private institutions’ motivations, dancers also were driven by their own desires and needs when they carried out their public roles as cultural ambassadors.

In order to study this tour from the dancers’ perspectives, this chapter draws heavily on oral history to understand the dancers’ everyday experiences on tour. I interviewed four dancers out of the twenty-three who went to Jamaica. While this is not an exhaustive number of dancers, I gained several insights into dancers’ lives in general and during this tour specifically. The dancers I interviewed were at various points in their career with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet; some were

3 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” Star.
leading dancers (i.e. soloist or principals) and others were part of the corps de ballet. Thus, I can also see how the dancers’ standing in the company affected their involvement in activities. All the participants were, however, female. This result was not by design but rather due to willing and able individuals. Furthermore, when I began the interviews, I was preoccupied with the political significance of this tour. As such, many of my questions revolved around their experience acting as cultural ambassadors. I quickly learned, however, that their experience in Jamaica were entangled with and informed by their everyday experiences beyond their time in Jamaica. Looking back, I realized there were many unexplored areas that could have provided more nuances to the story. For example, had I also viewed the dancers as tourists more of a discussion could have been developed on their perceptions regarding Jamaica. Nonetheless, the participants’ perspectives of the tour were invaluable to understanding the motivations of non-state actors carrying out the desired interactions.

In addition to oral history, I also engaged with two videos by the CBC, newspaper articles, and board meeting minutes. Missing from the source base are any documents written by or to the External Affairs of Canada. As a result, I have relied on what others said about the Canadian government’s involvement and interests. This gap in sources also leaves a lot unsaid about the experience of the Jamaican people. As in the previous chapter, understanding the host side of the exchange was difficult. Therefore, I am primarily focus on the role of Canadian non-state actors.

This chapter examines the key parts of any tour: pre-, during, and post-tour. First, I explore the behind-the-scenes elements of the tour to understand the dynamics between the public and private sector to begin to demonstrate that media outlets’ presentation of the tour was not the full reality. I will also analyze the outcome of the interplay of these relationships between public and private sectors. Then I turn my attention to the experience of non-state actors in Jamaica to

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4 Corps de ballet refers to the group dancers who are not the lead dancers.
5 I could not visit LAC, where these sources are located, due to COVID-19.
reveal emotions behind the dancers smiling faces seen in the press. In this section, I also examine the role the press had in packaging the dancers as cultural ambassadors. Finally, I will provide commentary on the success of the tour. While it is hard to make a definitive conclusion about any dance diplomacy exchange, it is worth a discussion to understand Canadian cultural diplomacy and the company involved. It also exposes contradictions in the use of ballet to build relations.

3.1 Public vs. Private: motivations, support, and impact

On August 6, 1962, Jamaica officially gained independence. As it was a significant moment in Jamaica’s history, there was large amount of fanfare and many activities surrounding the day, including the lowering of the Union Jack and raising of the Jamaican flag, a float parade, and learning the national anthem. Jamaicans remember the excitement and energy that passed through the country. One Jamaican, Beverly Mclean, vividly recalls her experience as a child during this period of time:

The whole island was abuzz with preparation for the big day in August. My father, now deceased, made sure the family attended all the functions surrounding the event, from “Race Course” and Ward Theatre to Kings House. There were float parades, Independence dances, costumed queen competitions, festival song competitions, and other events island wide. I do believe Denbeigh in Maypen was one of the rural events we enjoyed as well as some affairs in Montego Bay. There were garden parties everywhere as we proudly established the new members of government who would facilitate the transition from colonial rule to INDEPENDENCE. Finally, the big day arrived. We, (school children) proudly lined the driveway of Kings House in our starched and well-ironed navy blue tunics with white blouses. Every pleat was sharp as a razor. All white socks were newly purchased and the new black shoes sparkled from polishing. There were representatives from the primary school and high schools, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Girl Guides, Rangers, Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade, and of course, we marched proudly to the melodious sounds of our prestigious Jamaica Military Band. What a grand time. I clearly remember seeing the
All of these events and activities were in an effort to present the new country to the world. As Sabine Sörgel observed, “by the time of achieving full independence in 1962, Jamaican affiliation with the British Crown had eventually grown obsolete and the (re)invention of national cultural and its unifying symbols became paramount on the nation-builder agenda. Not only in regard of the Jamaican people themselves, but also in their relation to the world, an increase in awareness of Jamaica Festival of 1962, the country’s first Independence Celebration.” Part of the mission for the festival was to move the country towards decolonization and indigenization of Jamaican cultural identity by mobilizing cultural grassroots to instigate “an appreciation of folklore” and break down the elitist cultural dynamic in the country.

Under this framework, why was the Royal Winnipeg Ballet included in the festivities?

While there is no direct discussion on why specifically the RWB was invited, the obvious reason or how the exchange was presented was the governments’ desire to maintain and grow the countries’ relations. Therefore, the inclusion of the RWB in this momentous event was labeled a goodwill mission from Canada with the aim to build and expand the relationship between the two countries. As the Star stated, “another tie between Canada and Jamaica will be realized on Tuesday, January 15, when the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, with its entire ensemble of 53 persons gives its opening performance at the Ward Theatre.” It was to add to already established economic and trade relation. When reporting on Jamaica’s independence months before the tour, a CBC reports stated that Canada and Jamaica had “strong and valuable trade ties,” with Canada having “heavy investments in [Jamaica’s] climate, scenery, business life, and its natural

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8 Sörgel, Dancing Postcolonialism, 81.
9 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” Star.
resources.”

A part of this trade relation involved sugar, Jamaica’s main crop. Canada imported one-third of Jamaica’s sugar, even at a higher price than other countries exporting sugar, due to the price squeeze that affected Jamaica’s crop. Canada was also interested in welcoming Jamaica as one of the only other countries in the same hemisphere within the Commonwealth. Thus, using a “royal” institution was an excellent build upon commonalities.

This political and cultural presentation of the tour’s significance to independence and building relations made it appear that both the Jamaica and Canadian governments were heavily involved in the planning. In reality, there were a number of private institutions invested in the tour. As a result, their motivations impacted the outcome of the tour, both in favour of themselves and of the state interests. For instance, at the heart of the negotiations regarding this tour, was the RWB and the Jamaican impresario Stephen Hill of Celebrity Concerts Ltd. Documentation on their relationship is scarce. From the RWB’s board meeting minutes, the relationship between them appears to have begun in the second half of 1961 and plans were finalized after October 2, 1962. During this time, they discussed the details regarding budget, accommodation, itinerary, guarantee, etc. The finalization of plans, however, occurred in person when Alistair Mckichan, Secretary of the RWB, travelled to Jamaica to complete negotiations. As a result, there is little discussion on the RWB’s and Celebrity Concerts Ltd.’s motivations. There are no sources that reveal whether the Celebrity Concerts Ltd.’s interests went beyond the government’s motivations presented in the media. For the RWB, as it is with any ballet company, a tour was essential as it was how ballet companies connected with an audience beyond their home city.

As we have seen, the early 1960s was a turbulent period for ballet, and there was a growing emphasis on international success as synonymous with national praise. The RWB’s

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12 I tried to contact the Jamaica government archive regarding the tour, and I could not find any secondary information on the institutions.
negotiation with Jamaica occurred right around the period of the Ballet Survey. However, the
RWB board members and artistic director had no explicit or implicit discussions regarding how
this tour would benefit the company’s status in Canada or the importance of branching outside of
North America, a theme reflected throughout the NBC’s tours of Mexico. Therefore, it would be
easy to conclude that the RWB was not focused on the connection between international tours
and national status, particularly considering they did not bear the national title and were not seen
as ambitious as the NBC. When Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, co-founders, started their
ballet club and subsequent company, they did not set out to be a national ballet company. Instead,
Lloyd set programming policies that focused on the prairie experience. Max Wyman wrote, “if
prairie audiences were to be held beyond the initial novelty, [Lloyd] reasoned, she would have to
offer dance everyone could enjoy… Any attempt to re-create the traditions of the European
companies, she argued would be ridiculously out-of-place.”13 As such, Lloyd built the company’s
foundation on the prairies experience.

However, the idea that the RWB never thought about gaining a national status was not
always true. In 1944, there was a shift in mentality with a successful first “tour” to Ottawa for two
performances. These performances gained some national reviews that focused on cultural
policies. In the Ottawa Citizen, the editorial reflected, “perhaps this visit can be taken as a good
omen for the future when Canada shall receive encouragement in the arts as a national policy
stemming from the dominion government.”14 In addition, at the performance, there were several
“capital-city notables,” including foreign ambassadors, the nation’s chief justice, and highly
positioned civil servants.15 It is also at this performance that Lloyd’s interest in a national ballet
and state support begins to show. Lloyd stated to an interviewer, “It was really Winnipeg who

13 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 27.
14 Ottawa Citizen quoted by Torchy Anderson, “Ottawa Paper Editorialy Lauds Winnipeg Ballet,” The
Winnipeg Tribune, February 24, 1945, Manitoba: Digital Resources on Manitoba History; Wyman, The
Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the first forty years, 47.
15 Wyman, The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the first forty years, 47.
paid us to go and entertain Ottawa… but that can’t go on.”16 The trip cost $3,600, of which $1,200 was paid in guarantees, and a pre-tour benefit performance covered the rest.17 Moreover, in 1950, Lloyd left Winnipeg for Toronto to set up a new school. However, there was speculation that Lloyd “had her eye on the possibility of a job as head of the much-talked-about new national ballet.”18 Thus, it is hard to say that the RWB did not desire some national recognition. This idea was even more apparent in 1953 when Lady Margaret Tupper, member of the Board of Directors (1949 to 1957) sought out the royal designation to help grow the RWB’s international status.19

The publicity for the Jamaica tour offered by the RWB was further evidence of this desire for international status as they outwardly aligned themselves with the government’s interests. In a press release, following the RWB’s return to Canada, they wrote in response to “why the company went to Jamaica,” “It was a Goodwill tour, a way in which Canada could share in a Jamaica independence celebration.”20 In effect, the RWB maintained the tour’s diplomacy narrative. By only pointing to political importance in the press release, they removed any narrative that the tour was beneficial for the company. In their silence regarding any other explicit motivations, the RWB was speaking volumes. They appeared to be offering their talents to the government, and in effect showing that the company was driven by state interest, oppose to artistic development. Under the cultural context of the late 1950s to 1960s, this position would help package the RWB as a reliable company that would choose to represent Canada when they decided to travel internationally.

More influential to the outcome of the tour was how the tour was financed. Despite the apparent benefit the tour had in growing Canada-Jamaica relations and trade connections, the Canadian government did not financially contribute to, or officially acknowledge, the tour. The

18 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 74.
19 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 83.
20 Press Release no. date received orally by Interviewee 02.
Governor General of Canada and the Premier of Manitoba were listed alongside the Jamaican Governor General and the Minister of Development of Welfare. There was no press release from the Canadian government—just media stating it was a goodwill mission. During the planning, the RWB’s board indicated that Kathleen Richardson, a Canadian philanthropist and supporter of the company, reached out to the Canada Council for financial help to pay for transportation because the RWB was invited to participate in the independence celebration. The Council response was “that Canada was sending a government representative and did not feel that it would be possible to get financial assistance for the RWB.” This lack of financial and official support for the cultural diplomacy programs was not unusual in the 1950-1960s. The Canadian government liked to maintain an element of distance. Historian Graham Carr, in discussing Glenn Gould’s Tour of the Soviet Union, wrote, “by insisting that the private sector organize the exchanges and downplaying their ideological dimension, the government was playing a double game, promoting the notion that art should be ‘strictly non-political,’ while banking on a propaganda triumph all the same.” Brandon Webb further stated, “the Canadian government’s claims that exchanges were ‘non-political’ affairs arranged by private citizens masked for the public the ideological assumptions that determined what visits counted as ‘political.’ ” While Webb and Carr were discussing the Cold War’s political ramifications, the Canadian government’s “distant but there position” did affect the RWB’s tour in that it brought private companies into the decision making associated with the tour with their own interests. Yet, the government still benefitted from the outcome.

The lack of Canadian government financial support resulted in the RWB turning to the private sector, as money was always short, and they needed to raise approximately $21,000 for

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21 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” Stur.
22 “Jamaican Tour” Executive, April 6, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives, Executive Board Minutes, April 6, 1962, 001.
23 Carr, “ ‘No Political Significance of Any Kind,’ ”
the tour. The RWB reached out to businesses such as the Aluminium Limited, Trans-Canada Airlines, British Petroleum Shell Company of Canada, Bank of Montreal, Royal Bank of Canada, and Bank of Nova Scotia. They successfully gained sponsorship from Alcan (Jamaica) Ltd., Trans-Canada Airlines, Seagrams Corporation, W.C. Pitfield, and many Jamaican firms, with the major investors being Alcan Ltd. and Trans-Canada Airlines (TCA) to help cover the travel expenses. Trans-Canada Airlines was willing to “fly the company to Toronto on condition [that] the company fly on to Jamaica by TCA,” while the company requested the Alcan Ltd. company to cover $10,000 of the rest of the travel expenses. Foreign private investment was not new in Canada-Jamaica relations. By the time Jamaica gained independence, “[f]oreign private investment… exceed[ed] 300 million dollars. Nearly 2/3 of that has come from Canada.” With that amount, according to CBC, Canada financed the manufacturing of sports equipment, toothbrushes, paints, clothing, typewriters, Christmas tree lights and footwear on the island because the Jamaica government has offered generous tax incentives.

Private sponsorship influenced multiple aspects of the tour. For starters, the dancers and company personnel were not only greeted by Canada’s high commissioner, Roy Blake, when they arrived in Jamaica, but they were also greeted by Ian Edwards, head of the Trans-Canada Airlines. Further, due to the Alcan (Jamaica) Ltd.’s financial interest, the dancers performed in Mandeville, Jamaica, the city where the Alcan bauxite mine was located. While in Mandeville to perform, a group of dancers went to the site for a guided tour. This trip and financially supporting the ballet allowed the Alcan company to advertise itself as company representatives spoke to the

25 “Jamaica Tour,” Board of Directors, 2, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives, Board Minutes, April 25, 1962, 001.
27 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” The Star.
28 “Jamaica Tour,” Board of Directors, 2; Unsure of the exact number as I only have what they requested, and the General Manager response was “it would be given serious consideration and would be taken up with the Jamaica office of his company.”
media about their thoughts regarding the ballet. Following the opening night performance, the
*Winnipeg Tribune* wrote: “A telegram today from Alcan (Jamaica) Limited, one of the associated
sponsors of the trip, says in part: ‘Opening ballet performance outstanding success. We are proud
to be associated. Feel you will be reassured arrangements for tour now adequate.’”

They are connecting their company to the RWB, so that the readers potentially associate the performance
with the company. A more direct example of sponsoring a ballet tour as a source of advertisement
was in the “Ballet in Jamaica.” During the video, the narrator stated, “a new industry for the
island has become the most important revenue. Extracted from vast deposits of natural ore,
alumina is shipped north to feed Alcan’s huge smelter in Kitimat, British Columbia. This plant in
a year alone produces quarter-million tons of alumina a year.” This presentation of the company
allows individuals interested in ballet to also learn about Alcan’s progress.

This economic focus in the tour’s advertisement also supported the Canadian and
Jamaican governments by showing evidence of the Commonwealth countries’ ties. The Alcan
(Jamaica) Ltd. was strongly linked to Canada, as Jamaica’s aluminum was critical for feeding the
smelter in Kitimat, B.C. Canada also had 125 million dollars invested in the Jamaica bauxite
industry. The Alcan (Jamaica) Ltd. was a big business, employing two thousand workers,
producing three-quarters of a million tons of alumina, and making more than 5 million dollars
annually. This revenue was important to Jamaica because, in becoming independent, Jamaica’s
government was now responsible for its economy, and the economy was highlighted as one of
Jamaica’s major problems in the CBC independence video. For example, Robert Lightbourne,
Minister of Trade in Jamaica, stated, “our biggest problem: economics. Can we keep up our rate
growth? Can we, which is equally important, even more important, can we get our economic

31 “Jamaicans thrill to our ballet,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 19, 1963, Manitoba: Digital Resources on
Manitoba History.
32 “Ballet in Jamaica,” directed by Peter Kelly, 20/20, aired March 31, 1963 on CBC, 16 mm B/W release
growth to reach down to the poorest sector of our people.” Thus, the advertisement associated with the tour and potential expansion of industry could have benefitted the country’s overarching need for economic growth. This sentiment, however, was not explicit. Insight into the Jamaican involvement in and impact on the tour are limited. It is unclear if and how the Jamaican government supported the tour. A $7,000 guarantee was paid by Celebrity Concerts Ltd. to the RWB, which is standard practice in ballet exchanges. And according to the Star, the City of Kingston, Jamaica was the official sponsor of the tour.

What is clear though is that the Jamaican Tourist Board was involved in planning the ballet company stay in Jamaica. Fred Wilmot, promotions officer of the Jamaica Tourist Board, escorted the dancers and journalists around the island to various noteworthy locations. They also presented the dancers with gifts. Young-Marshall recalled, “the tourist board gave us a gift... from the tax-free, duty-free place in Kingston. [laughs] The owner wrote a letter saying ‘the swiss stores regret not being able to welcome you to this lovely island with a swiss watch, but since rum is the wine of Jamaica, they would like you to accept with their complement a small selection of Jamaica’s best rum’ [laughs].” Through these activities, the Jamaican Tourist Board positioned the exchange within a tourism narrative. There are no behind-the-scenes discussions that point to the motivations surrounding this decision. At the time of the performance, the tourism industry had experienced a downturn due to the North American recession. According to the CBC news reporter, in 1962, “many hotels started to bring the prices down. One hotel man plans to charge only $10.00 for a room and meal. He figures he can still make a profit with visitors spending more at the bar. The government itself indicated it isn’t too encouraged by the tourist prospects when it put a stop to the 2 million dollars... resort project on the west end of the

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36 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Ward Theatre Tuesday: Entire company will perform,” Star.
island. This was to be another Montego Bay.38 Therefore, at a surface level reading, the tourism narrative appears to have been designed to act as an advertisement for the island with the potential for economic gain, especially since tourism was a major industry in Jamaica. Nonetheless, this angle for the tour was significant and particular to the RWB’s exchange to Jamaica. When the NBC was in Mexico, the dancers were discouraged to act as tourists, while the RWB dancers were expected to engage in tourist activities. This expectation was partly due to the attitudes of the ballet companies. But it was also due to the RWB exchange occurring in Jamaica, as tourism was essential to the economic and social structure in Jamaica.

Figure 3.1 Audience at the Ward Theatre in Kington, Jamaica, 1963. Photo by the National Film Board; courtesy of Canada’s Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives.

Moreover, the design of the performance aided in the Jamaican independence festivities. While the RWB could potentially generate new ties for Canada and Jamaica, the RWB’s overall structure was in some ways in opposition to the overarching framework for the celebration and the efforts to decolonize the island, with its royal title and being a Europeanized art form. Yet, Jamaican festival organizers\textsuperscript{39} used the ballet performance to their advantage and fit it into the festivity goals stated above. Dancers not only performed in a traditional theatre, they performed

\textsuperscript{39} There is no discussion on who organized and planned where the performances would be, other than the Minster of Education planned the matinee.
twice at the national stadium for 15,000-20,000 Jamaicans, including school children. As Young-Marshall mentioned, there were no backdrops, wing, and lighting on this stage. As a result, this slightly removed the performances from their elitist identity and ensured that they were open to large audiences. By bringing the performance out of the traditional theatre, it appears the Jamaican organizers were able to partially align the performances with general efforts bridging the class division and eroded the distinctions between high and low art.  

All-in-all, the interplay of the private and public sector’s desires resulted in a tour that looked beyond the performances and ballet to build political, economic, and cultural relations. The tour organizers strategically placed the dancers in areas they saw as a benefit. In other words, the dancers became the vessel for the tour organizers to advertise their messages.  

3.2 Behind-the-Curtain: the dancers differing experiences  

Central to cultural diplomacy exchanges, like this one, was the role of non-state actors. Non-state actors are a defining feature of other diplomacies, as individuals and organizations “interact with each other.” They operate on a people-to-people interaction versus government-to-government level. However, it is expected that these actors operate in the states’ best interest for success to occur. As Carr wrote, “critical to the success of this form of diplomacy [cultural diplomacy] was the readiness of the non-state actors to blur the line between private and official, to act autonomously while embracing and internalizing the interests of the state.” For example, the RWB company’s personnel maintained the tour’s diplomatic purpose in their publicity as mentioned above. Likewise, the CBC crew shared the experience using nationalistic language for the Canadian public. For example, they pointed out many connections Jamaica had to Canada.  

However, non-state actors were varied and nuanced in their readiness and willingness to play these roles, and this becomes evident when you start to look into dancers’ everyday

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40 Sörgel, Dancing Postcolonialism, 83.  
experiences, even during a successful tour. Dancers were frequently thrust into a cultural diplomacy role because of their desire to dance. One of the more significant or explicit events that blurred the line between private and official, was the reception. Before performing in Jamaica, the dancers, RWB personnel, officials from Canada and Jamaica, and many others attended a dinner at Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante and Lady Bustamante’s residence. Here the dancers enjoyed local food and interacted with officials and private individuals. A newspaper article cited seeing dancers in an “animated conversation with Madame May Soohih, Leader of the Soohih School of Dancing and the topic was probably about ballet in Jamaica,” while in “Ballet in Jamaica,” some dancers are shown standing around the Prime Minister as he gave a toast on welcoming the company and discussing what independence meant to Jamaica.43 In his toast, he states how this tour is an “exchange of one country to the other will surely bring [them] nearer.”44 As such, this event symbolized the countries coming together and the growth of a relationship through the political and private.

To the dancer, this event was not unique to Jamaica. Country and city officials commonly hosted a reception for the company at each important stop along a tour. And since the RWB toured across Canada and the United States almost every year, they were continually attending these types of dinners. Due to this repetitiveness, the dancers interviewed did not remember much about Jamaica’s reception. Some mentioned the food being spicy, and other noted the beauty of the house and the garden. When they did discuss the evening in more depth, they often discussed their overall experience with receptions. Young-Marshall spoke of resentment and frustrations. She recalled, “it’s strange because, you know, you have been rehearsing and performing all day and then you finish then you have to get dressed up to go to a party. Sometimes, I think we resented having to go. You know, the food was good, and it was nice, but you were meeting

44 “Ballet in Jamaica,” B/W release print.
people you probably never see again. It’s part of the job, I guess.”45 Young-Marshall was not alone. Beverly Barkley, a RWB soloist, also discussed how there were nights that not many dancers would attend. Barkley, however, thought this was terrible. For her, the reception was enjoyable, and she also felt she had the responsibility of going because of the hard work people had gone through in putting on the events. She took it upon herself to bring up this concern with Arnold Spohr, artistic director, when she thought there were not enough participants, which resulted in Spohr implementing a rule that every night a designated group had to go.

These two experiences reveal how dancers differed in relation to the “official” part of the job. These evenings were added stress to an already demanding job for some, while, for Barkley, they were a duty. This duty did not necessarily come from a position of representing Canada. When asked if she felt she was representing Canada, she responded, “we were just dancing. I don’t think, you know, we thought we were, you know, representing any country…”46 Thus, this sense of duty was more out of responsibility to the company than the country, a common theme throughout the dancers’ interviews. In other words, their first thoughts were on representing the company and Winnipeg, with few extending that feeling to Canada when asked if they felt they represented Canada. For example, Young-Marshall stated, “we always knew we were representing Winnipeg, and they sure wouldn’t send the Winnipeg Jets down there.”47 But when asked to expand, she said it was combined because they had the Royal designation, clarifying, “we knew we had a role to play.”48

When dancers embodied national ideals, it seemed that it was out of loyalty to the individuals at the company. Dancers were always appropriately dressed on tour in a manner that aligned with gender norms of the time. The females were in dresses and men in trousers. This was partly due to how lightly they packed—Barkley noted that you could spot the new kid because of

45 Young-Marshall, interview.
47 Young-Marshall, interview.
48 Young-Marshall, interview.
how much they packed. However, some dancers also felt an expectation to present themselves properly. For instance, Kit Copping, RWB dancer, remembers the restriction Cindy, the wardrobe mistress, set out. Cindy told Copping she could not wear crinolines because “it shows more of your legs than necessary.”⁴⁹ Copping also recalled how she could not wear sleeveless tops after five. These rules, Copping admits, were mostly because of the times. However, Copping followed them because of her relationship with Cindy. Copping recalled, “Cindy was like our home-grown mother. She looked after us and made sure we didn’t make any mistakes. You know, you didn’t want to upset the people who were your supports.”⁵⁰ It was, in other words, not driven by nation, but a desire to please or support the teachers or company.

All this is not to say that some dancers were not aware of a larger context. For example, Copping was quite aware of the political and social dynamic. She recalled that it was “the celebration with the Prime Minister that really accentuated that, but…, also too, how careful they were about us. You know, we were very well looked after, and… escorted here, there and everywhere. So, you didn’t go anywhere by yourself really. There was always someone with you to make sure you were safe, and… knew you were taken back to your hotel.”⁵¹ She also remembered thinking about the difficulties for Jamaican when she discovered her new lingerie that she purchased in the United States disappeared in Jamaica:

I had bought some absolutely lovely lingerie, beautiful, pink and blue and lacey, everything. And it disappeared, the majority of it because I think that there are so many people there, the help was not well paid. And it’s not a good side of the situation. But to me it was funny that anybody would be interested in my bra or panties [laughs]. To this day, I still think about remembering I thought, ‘I had brought all of them, but I only have four, I thought I had five’… But when we were there it showed us that there were a lot of difficulties, you know, socially. And was not something that I… gave a huge amount of thought because you are so involved in what you are doing you don’t, I look at it a

⁵⁰ Copping, interview.
⁵¹ Copping, interview.
little differently now because I’ve more interested in watching the politics and having family that was involved with politics.\textsuperscript{52}

However, as the end of Copping’s story highlights, for the dancers, politics were secondary. They were there to dance. It was their passion and their job. As Copping stated, “it was fun. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed touring. And I enjoyed performing at the end of it because that was the goal no matter what.”\textsuperscript{53} This exchange was simply an extension of tours they had already taken part in and the work they were doing. They rehearsed right up until leaving for the tour. There were no additional preparations because of the “goodwill” status of the tour. As a result, it did not necessarily hold more significance, other than, for some, it was their first time travelling to a tropical country. For one member of the corps de ballet, it was not until after the fact that she “learned that it was their independence, and it was a goodwill [tour]” and during the tour she had “no concept of that when we went to Jamaica.”\textsuperscript{54}

Moreover, the tour organizers placed a great deal of emphasis on the external activities to promote the engagement, the ballet company, private industry, and the government relations. These activities were part of the dancers’ jobs. As Copping stated, “I think you did not have much of a choice. [laughs] When you went with the company, you were advertising for the company.”\textsuperscript{55} Young-Marshall also expressed how the excursions were not time off: “I think they were planned by the company and so where we had the one day off at the swimming pool, but these other things were, let’s say, required.” As a result, these activities were another opportunity for the dancers to flex their non-state actors’ roles to embrace and internalize the different interests of the other actors, state and private. However, these activities were not all business for the dancers, but instead were a source of enjoyment. Dancers expressed the delight that they got to go and talked fondly of the different activities, with the exception of the sugar cane plantation. One member of

\textsuperscript{52} Copping, interview.
\textsuperscript{53} Copping, interview.
\textsuperscript{54} Interviewee 02, (Dancer, The Royal Winnipeg Ballet), interviewed by the author, Calgary, November 2020.
\textsuperscript{55} Copping, interview.
the corps de ballet thought that learning about harvesting and the mill was interesting.\textsuperscript{56} However, Copping recalled she felt scared at the visit because “a lot of the workers had these great big machetes.”\textsuperscript{57} Barkley similarly expressed her distaste at the treatment of the workers, indicating when she asked how much the workers made, the tour guide responded that “they could live off the land.”\textsuperscript{58} They all talked fondly of going to places like Ocho Rios and the Dunn’s River Falls, where they could “climb up the rocks with the water coming down” and the falls led to the ocean and a “gorgeous beach, that was memorable,” according to Young-Marshall.\textsuperscript{59} They also mentioned they enjoyed their visit to the straw market, where they got to try on straw hats and browse the vendors.

This delight was partly because these trips allowed the dancers to enjoy Jamaica on the company dime. In the 1960s, dancers earned a small living, making approximately $17.70 per week.\textsuperscript{60} Living on that salary was difficult. Dancers remembered the strict budgeting they had to endure and the times they had to walk to the studio because they ran out of money for the bus. Touring often offered them some respite. On tour, they earned additional per diem to help cover the hotel and food.\textsuperscript{61} Thus, dancers, as Copping shared, looked forward to touring, and the inclusion of group activities was a benefit because, as Copping stated, “if you are stuck doing it on your own, [something that is] a little way out of town, well then it means it cost you money, you know. Then you are breaking into [your] per diem.”\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{56} Interviewee 02, interview.
\textsuperscript{57} Copping, interview.
\textsuperscript{58} Barkley, interview.
\textsuperscript{59} Young-Marshall, interview.
\textsuperscript{60} This was Beverly Barkley salary; Barkley, interview.
\textsuperscript{61} Barkley, interview.
\textsuperscript{62} Copping, interview.
These emotions and experiences were rendered invisible in the press in favour of a more nationalistic image. In “Ballet in Jamaica,” the dancers were the main constant throughout the narrative since they are the non-political purpose of the tour to which sub-political-context can be applied. As the narrator takes the viewer through the different parts of the tour and island, the dancers are shown smiling and enjoying themselves. As we have seen, this was a partly true emotion. They do not, however, have a voice. The narrator does most of the talking, sharing facts about the places the dancers were seeing and what they were doing on the island. For example, at the straw market, Young-Marshall is seen modelling the hats, and a lampshade, as the narrator
explains, “local arts crafts has been expanded to meet the growing demand of souvenir hunting. An entire section of the market has been given over to the display and sale of straw goods. The range of straw craft seems endless. But nothing was quite as exotic as this unusual lamp shade. Bright skin of the prickly parrotfish would make an interesting conversation piece in the Canadian recreation world.” In this sense, the dancers were shown embodying nationalistic friendship by “taking part in” the sharing of goods. Their emotions or feelings were not considered. Moreover, when the narrator does pass the mic over, Prime Minister Bustamante welcomes the dancers. The speech continues, allowing the Prime Minister to explain independence: “Regarding independence, we were very fortunate of obtaining it, in peace and happiest and without bloodshed. Of course, independence has brought us some financial difficulty. But with the help from God and our excitement, we will get through. Months ago, Britain had to pay for soldiers. Today we have our own Jamaican regiment, which we have to pay.” Once again, with this speech, the CBC crew maintained the political context through its content and by giving voice to a politician and silencing the dancers.

3.3 The Aftermath: successes and cultural clashes

Determining if this tour was successful is not straightforward, as there are many goals and narratives tied into the exchange. In addition, knowing if the tour and the advertising associated with it was successful in influencing the economy of the island or the Alcan (Jamaica) Ltd. company is nearly impossible. Nonetheless, there are insights to gain by studying the post-tour. As a ballet performance and company, the RWB received mixed reviews. A Jamaican newspaper reporter praised them for their “buoyant spirit,” the range in the programming, and

63 “Ballet in Jamaica,” B/W release print.
64 “Ballet in Jamaica,” B/W release print.
“professionalism dedication and sheer disciplined effort.”  

For the *Jamaica Gleaner*, Harry Milner wrote, “they rehearsed hour after hour prior to performing in the sweltering heat of the daytime Ward Theatre. As a result, they gave the packed house a full and entertaining programme that won the hearts of all. But let us not, as some have, lose all sense of judgment.” 

They liked pieces such as James Clouser’s *Recurrence*, a piece about “the sweet and bitter growing pains of the transition from adolescence to maturity.” 

Norman Rae noted that Sonia Taverner was extraordinarily good in *Recurrence* because the style suited “her taste and qualities.” Milner echoed this sentiment. However, the purer classical pieces were met with more criticism, with reports criticizing Sonia Taverner’s performance of Odile in the Black Swan Pas de Deux. Rae wrote, “Sonia Taverner’s Odile in the Black Swan Pas de Deux overwhelmed her Prince (Fredric Strobel) with steely glitter, no hint of soft seduction here such as has sometimes been suggested and can be inferred from the yearning passages in the music; this was the magician’s almost mechanical toy and Taverner took off at so great a rate that her control often slackened.” 

Harry Milner, for the *Jamaica Gleaner*, used this performance as evidence that the RWB was not the best company, writing:

This is certainly not the finest company of dancers that has visited the island. Katherine Dunham’s Group was far more talented. And on their showing on the second night, this company lacks a prima ballerina assoluta. Sonia Taverner has some of the magic of Margot Fontaine, which she displayed in one of that ballerina’s number “the Black Lake” sequence from “Swan Lake,” but not her fluidity and effortless ease. She is a technically good and poetic dancer; but unfortunately, in excerpts from the classics Jamaican audience have been spoilt. We have had here during the past decade such ballerinas as

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67 Milner, “Royal Winnipeg Ballet,” *Jamaica Gleaner*. 
69 Rae, “Royal Winnipeg Ballet… Higher jinks,” *Jamaica Gleaner*. 
70 Rae, “Royal Winnipeg Ballet… Higher jinks,” *Jamaica Gleaner*. 
84
These critics, however, did not necessarily diminish the overall success of the performances in Jamaica, which potentially helped lead to the RWB’s future international performances. While there is no direct connection mentioned in the scholarship, the year following the Jamaican tour, the RWB entered its “golden age” (1964-1970), according to Wyman.\textsuperscript{72} During this period, the RWB went on two significant tours: one to London for the Commonwealth Festival in 1965 and the other to France, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union in 1968, where the cultural ambassadorship was much more emphasized. Patti Milne, a member of the corps de ballet, who joined the company in 1971, recalled the magnitude of these tours on the international reputation and trajectory of the company. She stated, “[Jamaica] was sort of the start of international touring. Then when they got to go to Paris, not sure if they performed in England or not, but Paris then they went on to Russia; that was huge, and they were truly international stars. No one else had done that before, it was enormous. And that’s when they started every second year, they would organize an international tour for the company.”\textsuperscript{73} Therefore, it is hard not to see the correlation between the success of the RWB’s first international tour, performance-wise and as ambassadors, and the company’s subsequent growth.

These critiques of the RWB performance are also rooted in and reveal Jamaica’s growing national cultural identity that diverged from the European ideas of culture, a major goal for independence celebrations. Despite being a British colony, and being presented Europeanized notions of “high art,” Jamaica’s theatre dance was largely influenced by ritual-based African Caribbean folk dance, German expressionist, and U.S. modern dance technique.\textsuperscript{74} Up until the 1930s, classical ballet was the only dance taught in Jamaica. However, dance teachers did attempt

\textsuperscript{71} Milner, “Royal Winnipeg Ballet,” \textit{Jamaica Gleaner}.
\textsuperscript{72} Wyman, \textit{Royal Winnipeg Ballet}, 123.
\textsuperscript{73} Milne, interview.
\textsuperscript{74} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 12.
to integrate folk tunes and gestures into their dances.\textsuperscript{75} This integration only became more prevalent. Central to the development of dance in Jamaica was Ivy Baxter, a pioneer in Jamaican dance. She attended London Sigurd Leeder School where she learned about German expressionist style and concept of “movement as expression of self-identity.”\textsuperscript{76} With this new understanding of movement, Baxter returned to Jamaica to develop a form of artistic expression that suited Caribbean culture. In doing so, as Sörgel stated, “Ivy Baxter brought Jamaican folk culture to the urban middle class that under colonialism had lost any meaningful connection with this part of their African history and heritage.”\textsuperscript{77} Baxter was also influenced by ritual-based African Caribbean folk dance, which she experienced at the first Caribbean Art Festival in Puerto Rico in 1952. Here she witnessed dance troupes from other Caribbean islands re-enacting religious practices. As such, she, along with other pioneers of the Caribbean’s dance theatre movement, began to “develop their own dance techniques,” by blending religious ritual with her training in modern dance.\textsuperscript{78} Therefore, critics choosing more modern ballets over the classical piece, and Harry Milner noting that the “Katherine Dunham’s Group was far more talented,” were all in line with influences infused in Jamaica’s theatre dance over the years, particularly considering Katherine Dunham was an African American dancer who had profound influence on American modern dance and has been heralded for her “danced interventions towards African American empowerment.”\textsuperscript{79}

Beyond the performance, this tour was designed to build and grow a more robust cultural and political relationship between Canada and Jamaica as this was the first Canadian dance company to travel to Jamaica. At the end of the “Ballet in Jamaica,” the narrators spoke of the relationship that was formed as a result of the exchange:

\textsuperscript{75} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 67. \\
\textsuperscript{76} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 70. \\
\textsuperscript{77} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 71. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 76. \\
\textsuperscript{79} Sörgel, \textit{Dancing Postcolonialism}, 81.
Perhaps in some small way, Canada means more to the people of Jamaica now, more than just a source of tourism and trade. In a similar way, Jamaica has become more than a Northerner’s casual retreat from winter for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. The island’s marvellous climate, its perfusion of scenic wonders, and exciting history, while more than equally matched by the character of its inhabitants. And into this generation, a new nation is born. A new nation whose promise lies not with the colourful past, but in the dignity and newfound purpose of the Jamaican people.80

While this statement paints a growing bond between Canadians and Jamaicans, the reality of this stated relationship is hard to qualify. When talking to the dancers about their time there, they do mention the friendliness of citizens and being well-treated, which shows some level of relations. However, this commentary does not say much with respect to a long-lasting relationship and some dancers had little to say when explicitly asked about their experiences interacting with citizens. Furthermore, dancers did not explicitly discuss race throughout their interviews. There was discussion of English influence on the island. Barkley noted that that Jamaica “did have a strong English influence… people from England were there. You know, the English were the head of sugar plantation…”81 In addition, there were times in that they did allude to potential racial tension. For example, Barkley recalled “the people were very friendly. The only… frightening thing was, well, when they climbed up the window on the outside of theatre. Climbed up to in through the windows, probably to rob to get whatever we had.”82 In future research, it would be useful to explore with dancers whether or not their opinion or perspective of Jamaica and its people changed as a result of the tour to provide even more nuance to this discussion with a particular focus on racial differences.

Furthermore, while ballet was used to bring the countries together, it is also the site in which the differences between the cultures was the most glaring. For example, according to

80 “Ballet in Jamaica,” B/W release print.
81 Barkley, interview.
82 Barkley, interview.
Young-Marshall, the audience had an unusual reaction to their performance *Bitter Weird*. She explained that in the drama piece the hero was stabbed, and to her amazement the audience laughed, which according to her was not the normal reaction for the piece. Through this memory, Young-Marshall revealed how the contact between the performer and audience highlighted cultural differences. This difference was also revealed to the CBC crew when confronted with Jamaicans taking part in ballet class at a local school, Soohih School of Dancing. In the “Ballet in Jamaica” and Peter Kelly’s report about the visit, race was only discussed when they were talking about the dancers at Soohih School of Dancing. Peter Kelly wrote:

> we found another link with the past at Madame Souih’s [sic] Ballet Studio in Kingston, for here in microcosm were the many faces of Jamaica, an island where the races have mingled and intermarried on a scale probably unique in the world – often with strikingly beautiful results. Some of the ancestors of these dancers came to the Sugar Islands in slave ships from the West Coast of Africa, from the Gulf of Guinea and the Bight of Benin, Eboes and Mandingoes, Yoruba and Coromantee, Indentured bondsmen were brought from Ireland and Wales and settlers came from Germany, Scotland, England. Today they are all Jamaicans.

Similar information was narrated over a video of Jamaican dancers in “Ballet in Jamaica.” In making this connection, the CBC crew insinuated that in seeing black individuals taking ballet class, a European, white, art form, revealed the racial and social history of Jamaica to them. In addition, by sharing this realization, the CBC crew also draws attention to the different realities of two British colonies—Canada and Jamaica—with one being a settler colony and the other being a plantation colony.

Despite these differences, there was continued interest in having a Canadian ballet visit Jamaica. In 1964, there was communication between the High Commissioner for Canada and the National Ballet of Canada regarding the possibility of the ballet company visiting Jamaica. In a letter, after discussing the success of the RWB’s visit, the Higher Commissioner wrote, “Mr. Rex

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83 Copping, interview.
Nettleford, Director of the National Dance Theatre Company, and Mrs. Greta Fowler, Director of the Little Theatre Movement, with whom I have had exploratory discussions, have both expressed great enthusiasm at the prospect of the Canadian National Ballet coming to Jamaica. They think it would get good houses; that being a Ballet from ‘over water’ as they say in Jamaica, it would attract prestige audiences and command higher prices; and that it would also be very popular with children.”

In addition, twenty-four years later, in 1987, Stephen Hill, impresario, invited the NBC to take part in the 25th anniversary of Jamaica’s National Independence, declaring that “Canada [and] Jamaica share long standing warm ties [and] mutual interests within British Commonwealth. This project would greatly enhance [that] century long association.”

Both of these proposed tours were considered, and plans were made, but ultimately did not occur. While there was no successful continuation of a ballet relationship, these interactions do reveal some level of continued interest from both Jamaicans and Canadians.

3.4 Conclusion

Overall, the RWB’s tour to Jamaica developed a diplomatic narrative with the help of the media. The newspapers and media outlets propagated a narrative of a goodwill mission, despite the distant involvement of the Canadian government. As such, the RWB played the ideal role of non-state actors in cultural diplomacy endeavours, which allowed ballet to remain “non-political,” yet also allowing the Canadian government to benefit from the tour. This narrative, however, obscured key players’ motivations and experiences during the tour. In other words, behind the goodwill label, lay a myriad of different realities and experiences. Due to lack of government involvement, the private sector became the main supporter of the tour, resulting in the tour also being designed for the benefit of the investors. The RWB did maintain the

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86 Stephen Hill to Bob Johnston, 26 September 1986, National Ballet Archives, 40, Tour Engagements International Caribbean, Jamaica.
importance of the tour for the relations of the countries. Yet when analyzed in the Canadian cultural context and increasing international standing of the company following the tour, it becomes apparent that the RWB was attempting to position itself as Canadian in the hopes for growth. Jamaica also had their own realities that went beyond their relations with Canada, as the tour was situated within Jamaica’s efforts to present the world a national culture. Moreover, studying the dancers’ experience also reveals the different perception and attitudes various non-state actors had. They did not “enlist” themselves to act in the interest of state in the same way journalists did, but rather, took part because of their loyalty to the company and their desire to dance. In other words, within the constraints of their job, they acted for themselves and the RWB. They had their own emotions regarding part of their job and (re)interpreted aspects of the tour through their realities as hard-working dancers. Ultimately, despite these realities, the tour still supported the government through the media presentation of the tour, in which they layered state interests over the “non-political” status of a tour. However, an analysis of reactions to the performances and the outcomes from the exchange shows that the tour did not simply benefit the government, but rather, continued to reveal various realities.
Chapter 4

Canadian Enough?: National Ballet of Canada and Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s Government-Sponsored Tours to Europe and Latin America in 1972 and 1974

In the 1970s, Canada’s cultural diplomacy policies underwent significant intensification, which resulted in several government-sponsored cultural events. Included in these events were two ballet tours: one was to Europe in 1972 by the National Ballet of Canada (NBC), and the other was to Latin America in 1974 by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB). Both tours were nine-weeks long, primarily funded by the Department of External Affairs (DEA) and declared a success by officials and the company. However, Canadians reacted notably differently to each. Reviewers criticized the NBC for not promoting Canadian talent and often questioned whether the NBC was Canadian enough. On the other hand, critics celebrated when the Latin American audience favoured Canadian choreographed pieces. This difference is significant because the NBC upheld the ideals of the national company by maintaining a European identity. In contrast, the RWB was relegated by Canadian officials to regional status because it departed from the European-classical tradition. Thus, the reaction of reviewers to these two ballet tours begs the question, did the domestic cultural policies followed by the NBC reflect the Canadian desires?

From the formation of the Massey Commission, officials favoured a high European art to distance themselves from the United States. This ideal carried into cultural diplomacy policies, particularly in the 1970s. However, I argue that Canadian reactions to the tours reveal contradictions in association with this objective of Canadian domestic cultural policies. For the public, Canadian talent was necessary.

On the surface, studying two ballet companies appears to be merely examining the ideal “high-art” form of dance, particularly considering British women founded both companies. Both
the NBC and the RWB blend nicely into the cultural elite’s ideas of Canadian culture. The reality, however, is that the identity of each company was unique. Therefore, ballet provides an optimal opportunity to study the Canadian perspective on domestic cultural policies because the companies’ similarities amplify their differences. As Cheryl Smith wrote, “a comparative history of several ballet companies makes a more useful study because it throws light on the common and disparate elements.”1 Their status as high-art gives both companies prominence in Canada, as Lisa Doolittle and Anne Flynn argued in their post-colonial analysis of dance development across Canada; cultural elites saw modern dance as lesser than ballet.2 However, the RWB’s style blended modern technique with ballet from the beginning. Therefore, the structure of Canadian ballet, with the RWB being second tier to the NBC is reminiscent of the stratification of types of dance across Canada.

Drawing on Doolittle and Flynn’s argument, I aim to show the manifestation of the ideal art form within the world of Canadian ballet and its contentious position with the Canadian public and artistic directors. Beyond public criticism, artistic directors had to balance their artistic vision, the audience interest, and government desires. The NBC’s tour to Europe provides an excellent lens through which to study the question: “how does a cultural institution that performs European classical tradition represent Canada?” This research question emerges from historian Sarah Dougherty’s article on the Stratford Festival’s foray to Europe. She wrote, “in an era of Canadianization and emphasis on Canadian content, as described by Jeffrey Cormier, the Festival’s tours demonstrate how the theatre’s continued reliance on British culture and heritage, with sponsorship from the Canadian state, was a contradiction to the emerging new cultural nationalism of the period.”3 In making a comparison, I hope to provide a nuanced discussion of what causes this contradiction, what Canadians view as national, and the differences in the

1 Smith, “‘Stepping Out,’” 38.
2 Doolittle and Flynn, “Dancing in the Canadian Wasteland.”
3 Dougherty, “Touring Shakespeare,” 75.
diplomatic approach of the two companies, depending on the tour location and the company’s ballet style.

This chapter is broken into three sections. First, I outline the 1970s cultural diplomacy context to ground these tours in the changing policies. The NBC tour to Europe closely aligned with Canadian foreign interests in the art presentation and geographical location, while the RWB’s tour to Latin America did not. Therefore, this section helps provide the context for the contradictions in the policies. Second, I turn to the NBC tour. Here, I give an overview of the tour and analyze the praise and criticism in the reviews. I aim to provide a basic understanding of the reception of the NBC by the reviewers and Canadian people to compare with the later tour by the RWB in section three. Section three discusses the RWB tour to South America in relation to the NBC. I compare the NBC’s and the RWB’s Canadian choreography and the diplomatic nature of the tours.

4.1 1970s Cultural Diplomacy Context

When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau took office in 1968, there was an escalation of the federal government’s focus on cultural diplomacy policies and cultural activities abroad. One of the significant developments during this period, proposed by Mitchell Sharp in 1972, was the “Third Option” position, which served a dual function. First, it aimed to lessen the United States’ cultural and economic impact on Canada by moving attention to Europe. This sentiment was not new in cultural foreign policies, as two decades previously, Vincent Massey articulated the importance of a distinct identity from the United States in the Massey Commission. However, the Third Option solidified the idea and worked by diversifying Canadian trade relations. As Rushton stated, “the Trudeau government made no secret of its desire to build and export a Canadian cultural identity that was distinct from that of the United States, to reduce the country’s
‘excessive reliance’ on its American neighbour, chiefly by exposing Canadians to the benefits of trade diversification.”

Secondly, in tandem with the aim of diversification, international relations aimed to strengthen national unity and promote Canadianization policies at home. These efforts were a reaction to Quebec’s interest in its own foreign policies during the Quiet Revolution in which Quebec underwent a cultural awakening. While the federal government was modestly promoting Canadian culture aboard, Quebec officials were pressuring French-speaking nations to express confidence in their French identity. As a result, Quebec gained prominence in the international arena to the point that French-speaking countries turned to Quebec to help mount cultural exchanges. A major controversy occurred in 1968 when Quebec was invited to the conference for education ministers of French-speaking nations over the Canadian federal government. Following this event, the federal government spoke firmly about how they were the only ones permitted to engage in foreign policy. By diversifying trade relations and increasing government involvement in cultural diplomacy, the federal government hoped to strengthen national unity and improve relations with French-speaking nations beyond France. As part of this, federal officials “campaigned to sell the image of Canada as a bilingual and bicultural nation.”

Trudeau’s administration also set up a single entity responsible to conduct cultural exchanges. Early on, Trudeau’s administration “initiated a Department of External Affairs-led review of Canada’s foreign policy.” The review made it clear that a single entity that was “responsible for implementing the extension abroad of national policies was needed and that

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5 Andrew Fenton Cooper, “Canadian Cultural Diplomacy: An Introduction,” in Canadian Culture: International Dimension, ed. Andrew Fenton Cooper (Toronto: Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, University of Waterloo/Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1985), 16; Rushton, “The Origins and Development of Canada’s Public Diplomacy,” 89.
6 Cooper discussed Paris’ attempts to mount a major exhibition of Canadian painters in 1963 and had to turn to Quebec for help. Cooper, “Canadian Cultural Diplomacy,” 12-13.
cultural activities would be the vehicle for those policies.” It was decided that the DEA was to become the prime actor because the report stated, “information policy must be closely related to other aspects of Canadian international policy,” and therefore the DEA was the “logical” choice. Following that decision, an advisory committee was established, including the Secretary of State, the Canada Council, the National Arts Centre, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board of Canada, the Department of External Affairs and the Treasury Board. However, the committee lacked a consensus in how to conduct cultural exchanges. While diplomats had an easier time developing contacts than non-diplomats needed to plan foreign cultural exchanges, External Affairs lacked the needed specialization in the arts that “made it difficult to exert overall authority in these discussions” with the above cultural agencies. Therefore, as Cooper argued, Canada’s cultural diplomacy policies were full of problems because the federal government operated from a reactionary mentality. Cooper further maintained that the policies were held together by:

the geographical focus of the activity: all the interested parties agreed that Europe was ‘the most important area for the intensification of those relations.’ Besides its continuing concern about Quebec’s cultural initiatives in Western Europe, External Affairs looked to that as the natural counterweight to the United States… Furthermore, the Secretary of State’s increasingly important multicultural policy placed great emphasis on the close attachment of most Canadians to their European roots.

Under these aims, External Affairs launched many cultural programs, with several of them focused on Europe.

11 Cooper, “Canadian Cultural Diplomacy,” 16-17.
12 Cooper, “Canadian Cultural Diplomacy,” 17.
4.2 The National Ballet of Canada goes to Europe

On May 17, 1972, the NBC had their European premiere in London, England. Over the following nine-weeks, the company performed in Stuttgart, Paris, Brussels, Glasgow and Monte Carlo, performing La Sylphide, Kraanerg, the Mirror Walkers, Intermezzo, Fandango, The Judgement of Paris, Swan Lake, and Session. Officials and the company personnel treated this tour with an air of importance. Prior to its departure, the NBC threw a Bon Voyage party in the O’Keeffe’s grand foyer, a performing arts centre built in Toronto in 1960. The party included supper, a performance by Jazz Babies, and a fashion show by Vali of Montreal. The cost of the ticket was $12.50 for patrons to attend the party. This lavish send-off was just the beginning. A week before opening night, Canada House in London held a press conference that “drew over 50 journalists.” At the conference, Canada’s High Commissioner to Great Britain, Jake Warren, relayed Prime Minister Trudeau and External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp’s messages to the dancers. Trudeau was reported as saying, “may your tour be exciting and may you enjoy full houses and excellent reviews.” For the opening night, a select committee was formed to organize a gala performance. Belle Shenkman, chair of the gala and a former Ottawan, ensured the audience was filled with the diplomatic corps. Most noticeably within the audience was Princess Anne, who was greeted by Canada’s High Commissioner Jake Warren at the performance. Shenkman also “filled the lobbies with a veritable forest of potted trees and saw that the occasion was treated with an aura of importance.” This sense of importance carried through the tour, with newspapers also citing Paris’s audience of diplomats. Tim Creery, in the Calgary Herald, wrote, “in front of them was a mostly ‘official audience’ for whom the evening was

largely a diplomatic affair.”\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, when arriving home, the dancers were greeted by ballet students, Mayor William Dennison, and federal and provincial government representatives to offer their congratulations.\textsuperscript{17}

All of these efforts to create an air of prominence were primarily due to the significance the NBC, and more specifically Franca, placed on Europe to be considered of world-class standard. Generally, in the ballet world, audiences in Paris and London were the most important because the Paris Opera and Royal Ballet are widely considered the best. Ironically, these important audiences were made up of international press and diplomatic corps. However, both of these cities were seen as having the most demanding and toughest critics because the audience was filled the influential ballet professionals. As James Neufeld wrote, “London was home to an influential international ballet press and to a remarkable concentration of ballet professionals whose opinions on matters of dance were authoritative.”\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, performing in these major European cities was considered a test to the reputation of the company and their performances.

Critics recognized this importance for the NBC. Harold Morrison wrote for the \textit{Calgary Herald}, “[the NBC] had danced in Japan, the United States and Mexico but this was the first attempt to match, in critics’ eyes, the subtle, sensitive performance of the Europeans.”\textsuperscript{19} Franca recognized the significance of performing in Europe and treated the performance as a trial for world status. As a result, she put pressure on herself and her dancers.

Moreover, for Franca, a visit to London, in particular, was also personal and a long-term goal. London was Franca’s former home. She had worked at Sadler’s Well Ballet before moving to Canada to start the NBC. As such, Franca viewed returning to Europe with her own ballet

\textsuperscript{17} “National Ballet comes home to kisses and flowers,” \textit{Toronto Star}, July 5, 1972, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.
\textsuperscript{19} Harold Morrison, “Ballet performers nervous as they await opening night,” \textit{Calgary Herald}, May 17, 1972, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.
company, from a country that had no prior ballet standing on a global scale, as a victory and was a goal for her from the beginning of her work building the NBC. In the lead up to Europe, she was reported saying, “I felt originally that we should have come years after we started the company. Our growth in that period was so remarkable. But the important thing is that it is finally happening. If it hadn’t come now, our artists would have gone crazy.”

Therefore, the European tour was treated by Franca with the utmost importance.

The level of importance of the tour was also because the government publicly sponsored the visit. The NBC received a remarkable $200,000 grant from the DEA, which secured the ability for the NBC to tour Europe with a 55-member company. Franca often cited money as a reason for failure to achieve desired heights in the ballet world. Moreover, support from the government underscored the validity of the company’s claim to be a national entity. In 1965, the NBC had had a chance to visit Europe for the Commonwealth festival; however, the federal government supported the RWB instead. A year later, the NBC attempted to, once again, secure a trip, albeit to French-speaking countries, by “exploit[ing] the politically attractive Montreal connection.” Still, the federal government sent the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal alone. Therefore, the 1972 tour was of great significance to the NBC.

David Haber, a government representative, was key to the success of acquiring the funding and confirmation with the DEA to send the company to Europe for the summer of 1972. Haber had connection to both the NBC and government. In 1952, David Haber had joined the NBC as stage director, and resigned in 1956. After a period working for the William Morris’s Agency in the United States, he returned to Canada to produce a theatrical attraction at Expo ’67 in Montreal. He also consulted on the World Festivals for Osaka’s Expo ’70 and helped the Canada Council set up the Canada Council Touring Office. Haber used these connections to both

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the NBC and cultural activities to lobby for the ballet company to be chosen by the federal government to play out their dream.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{4.2.1 Praise and Problems: artist vs nationalist}

Throughout the tour, the NBC received relatively positive reviews from both the Canadian and European press, with several reports stating that the NBC’s debut in Europe “makes Canadians proud” or “is very appealing.” As this tour was responsible for establishing and solidifying the status of the company, receiving this positive praise made Franca feel accepted. The opening night was the real test for Franca and the NBC troupe because they performed in front of many people important in the ballet world, including Franca’s “former teacher, Stanislav Itzikowshi, and former bosses, Dame Marie Rambert and Dame Ninette de Valois, ‘the doyennes of British ballet.’ ”\textsuperscript{24} Therefore, receiving positive reviews and enthusiastic applause was critical for the reputation of the NBC. Following the opening night, William Little wrote, in the \textit{Toronto Star}: “To [her former teacher and bosses] she had proven that she could do it, that she could build in Canada a major classical ballet company, with dancers able to stand on an international stage.”\textsuperscript{25} This feeling of acceptance extended beyond her former colleagues. Later during the tour, in the \textit{Globe and Mail}, Franca was quoted saying, “the success of its European debut in London proved beyond doubt that [the NBC] has been accepted as ‘a very important company. There were certain things the critics didn’t like, but the important thing is that we have been accepted as an established ballet company, and we don’t have to run around proving it.’ ”\textsuperscript{26}

While Celia Franca and some critics viewed this tour as a success, the engagement was plagued by questions regarding whether the NBC was “Canadian” enough to represent Canada.

\\textsuperscript{23} Neufeld, \textit{Passion to Dance, The Long-Awaited European Debut.}
\textsuperscript{24} Littler, “Ballet’s London debut makes Canadians proud,” \textit{Toronto Star.}
\textsuperscript{25} Littler, “Ballet’s London debut makes Canadians proud,” \textit{Toronto Star.}
\textsuperscript{26} “Franca feels accepted,” \textit{The Globe and Mail}, May 27, 1972, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.
Even before opening night, Barbara Gall Rowes, a reporter for the *Globe and Mail*, declared that the response to opening night and box-office sales was “not entirely due to the reputation of the company.”\(^{27}\) This is partly due to the NBC’s decision to include high profile, well-known guest dancers in the programme that financially and with respect to the reception of the tour costed the NBC and the DEA. Opening night had Niels Kehlet of the Royal Danish Ballet performing in *La Sylphide*, and Georges Piletta appearing in *Kraanerg*, while Marcia Haydée and Richard Cragun of the Stuttgart ballet performed in John Cranko’s *Legende* as a duet. The guest stars appeared throughout the tour. To Rowes, the inclusion of guests took away from the NBC dancers and the company’s reputation. She commented on how *Legende* had “no connection with the National Ballet, except that the company has put up the funds to sponsor both choreographers and dancers.” Moreover, Rowes quoted Niels Kehlet saying how this was unfair to the NBC dancers: “This is not right for a company of this age and calibre. They are afraid because they want so much to do well. But if they only relax and dance themselves, they will find they have nothing to be afraid of.”\(^{28}\) Zena Cherry, in the *Globe and Mail*, sums up this issue by stating, “but London and Toronto critics have already complained it’s not a very Canadian ballet because so many high-priced guest stars have been hired from other countries.”\(^{29}\)

This decision by the NBC, however, was part strategic and part situational. The NBC personnel understood that the company did not have a European following yet. Thus, they had to consider the box-office when designing the programme. Initially, the NBC personnel had chosen Erik Bruhn to be their guest star. He was well associated with the company as two of his works were already determined to be a part of the touring repertoire, and he had worked eight years with the company as a choreographer, coach, and teacher at the school. Rounding out this decision was

\(^{27}\) Barbara Gail Rowes, “Ballet: Troupe’s Europe tour insult to own dancers,” *Globe and Mail*, May 9, 1972, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.


the fact he already had an international reputation. Therefore, he would draw in box-office sales, while also not overshadowing the company’s ability. He was “a guest yet not a guest.”  

Unfortunately, Bruhn suffered from undiagnosed chronic pain that, by late December 1971, was so severe that he announced his retirement. In early January 1972, it was confirmed he would not be performing with the NBC in their European tour. As a result, Franca reluctantly settled for Niels Kehlet, Georges Piletta, Marcia Haydée and Richard Cragun at Bruhn’s recommendation to ensure some publicity hype.  

Franca’s decision did create excitement, as they sold out opening night. However, for the Canadian public, this decision made them question Franca and the NBC’s nationalism. At the root of this criticism was the lack of a Canadian choreographer, which leads to how we define “Canadian.” Does Canadian mean Canadian choreography and dancers? Or is it in the geography of the company? In April 1972, before their tour, Clive Barnes vocalized this question in the *Globe and Mail*. In response, he wrote “personally I’m beginning to develop a theory that a national ballet is a company geographically, culturally and socially based on one specific national area which calls itself a national ballet, and, most important of all, gets away with it. Should it then reflect the nation that owns it? Perhaps, but not necessarily a reflection of nationalistic idioms.” He admits he is at a loss if asked what is particularly Canadian about the NBC. However, he counters this idea with “what is particularly Canadian about Canada. Or, for that matter, American about the United States…” And further states that the NBC had achieved a “large-scale, homogenous company capable of presenting ballet on a grand scale” and was not a miniature version of the Royal Ballet.  

Veronica Tennant, a principal dancer for the NBC, confirmed this sentiment: “Miss Tennant herself became aware of her Canadian style during a six-week study tour of European companies in 1968. ‘I found,’ she said, ‘that people wondered...”

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where I was from. They knew my dancing wasn’t English, wasn’t European and definitely not American, so they didn’t know what to think.’”

Barnes concluded by stating that the NBC lacked an individual character: “By this I do not mean a lack of specifically Canadian character, for that itself is nebulous; and it would be poor advice to offer a company with international aspirations to embark on a course of Canadiana. Yet creatively the company has a poor record.”

This view, however, was not shared widely.

To the Canadian population, there was an issue with a company performing European classics while representing Canada. William Littler, for the *Toronto Star*, wrote, “After last night [Franca] will doubtless continue to be criticized. There was no Canadian ballet on the gala programme and some of the leading roles were taken by non-Canadian guest artists. As a nationalist, Celia Franca has her limitations.”

According to Franca, she tried producing a “great Canadian choreographer,” stating, “we have workshop programmes where the dancers can find out if they have talent, and lots have tried their hand. We have had many Canadian ballets in the repertory, but they have had to go out again because they were not good enough. But how many good choreographers are there anywhere? British ballet was lucky to have an Ashton when it started. Is there another Ashton? So, we go on trying and meanwhile, we have an eclectic repertory.”

However, to Rowes, this was “mere rhetoric.” She argued that Franca “had never shown any exceptional interest in developing those... [talents].”

There is some truth to Rowes’ critique and Franca’s limitations as a nationalist. Choreography was a long-standing issue for the company. According to Neufeld, the failure to develop a Canadian choreographer or choreography was partly due to a lack of money and

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34 Barnes, “How national the National Ballet?” *Globe and Mail*.
36 “Celia Franca continues the search for a Canadian Ashton,” *Times*, May 16, 1972,
38 Rowes, “New signs of distinctive Canadian dance,” *Globe and Mail*.
support for the notion, but also due to how Franca viewed ballet. First, she thought of ballet as an international art form. Rather than striving for a choreographer based on nationality, she looked for talent. She thought of herself as the “standard-bearer, bringing an international vision of dance and choreography to Canada.” In 1971, Franca did make a push for company members to produce original choreography because of her “somewhat over-anxious desire to push Canadian choreographers in the hope that we could show their works in Europe.” However, the works Franca had been hopeful about were unsuccessful. The timing of this push leads me to speculate that Franca was aware of criticism to come. Secondly, Franca believed that a “classical ballet company should present a modern repertoire consistent with its classical heritage, not antithetical.” As a result, Franca put her artistic vision before her nationalism. However, this somewhat counter how she positioned the company as a national entity, mentioned in chapter two. And going into the tour, Franca maintained that she had “achieved in developing a company with ‘a definite Canadian character.’ ”

4.3 Royal Winnipeg Ballet goes to Latin America

Two years after the NBC went to Europe, the RWB was provided with an opportunity to visit Latin America under government auspices for nine weeks, starting on April 15, 1974 in Buenos Aires. The RWB was one of the six planned cultural programmes organized and funded by the federal government in 1974 and one of two exchanges not to Europe. The Department of External Affairs, through the Canada Council Touring Office, offered the RWB $167,000 for the tour. The dancers travelled to Buenos Aires, Rosario, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Bogota,

39 Neufeld, Passion to Dance, iBook, Experimental Workshops for a Generation of Young Rebels.
40 Artistic Director’s Report to the Annual General Meeting, November 12, 1971, National Ballet of Canada Archives quoted in Neufeld, Passion to Dance, iBook, Experimental Workshops for a Generation of Young Rebels.
41 I can only speculate because I was unable to view the behind-the-scenes for this tour due COVID-19 lockdowns.
42 Neufeld, Passion to Dance, iBook, David Adams, Canadian Choreographer and the Company’s First Premier Danseur.
Cali, Panama, Managua, Mexico City, Puebla, Guadalajara, and Havana over nine weeks, performing 46 times along the way. In consultation with Alejandro Szterenfeld of Buenos Aires, a South American impresario, they selected fifteen ballets to premiere to a Latin American audience, including Ecstasy of Rita Joe, Still Point, Pulcinella Variations, Sebastian, What To Do To the Messiah Comes, Meason Lark, Rondo, and Pas de Deux Romantique. Throughout the engagement, the RWB received praise and, in the end, the tour was considered very successful. For example, an article in the Winnipeg Tribune, following the tour, documents the audience reception in different cities, stating that “in Rio de Janeiro, Sylvester Campbell and Bonnie Wykoff had to repeat their pas de deux before the audience would let them leave the stage. In Lima, the dancers had a thunderous reception, with members of the audience stamping their feet on the ground in a Peruvian gesture of appreciation. In Bogota, where crowds lined the city block around the theatre waiting to buy tickets, the dancers had oxygen tanks in the wings to help them breathe the rarified atmosphere of the high-altitude Colombian capital.”

However, the RWB and Canadian officials did not treat this tour with a similar air of importance as the NBC’s trip to Europe. The RWB did not receive the same Bon Voyage and Welcome Home party as the NBC did. In addition, while the RWB did receive a fair amount of press coverage in Canada, it was mainly provided by the Calgary Herald and the Winnipeg Tribune, with one article in the Globe and Mail. This difference, first, is because Latin America was not a “high-art” destination. From a diplomatic perspective, Latin America was not the prime location targeted by the Third Option despite the significance of being the first ballet company to travel to a place such as Cuba during the Cold War. As Copper stated, “efforts in other non-European areas seemed to be rather haphazard. When the Royal Winnipeg Ballet toured nine

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45 All three dancers discussed their experiences in Cuba the most. They offered stories about the surveillance they were under to ensure minimal connections between the Canadian dancer and Cuban citizens and Russia dancer, who were also in Cuba at the same time.
Latin American countries in 1974, it missed Venezuela—Canada’s largest customer in the region.\(^{46}\) However, according to Patti Milne, a member of the corps de ballet, this decision not to visit Venezuela was due to civil unrest that was occurring in the country and a desire to ensure the dancers’ safety.\(^ {47}\) In addition, Latin America did not have the same reputation in the ballet world as Europe did from an artistic perspective. According to the cultural elites, Europe tested ballet companies’ standing in the way Latin America could not; going up against London or Paris critics allowed Canada to emerge as a distinct, mature nation. Moreover, the RWB had not been waiting specifically from their inception to travel to Latin America, as the NBC had with Europe. They had toured extensively from the company’s inauguration and had been the first visit to many places. As a result, travelling to Latin American was not a celebration as it was for the NBC. In addition, in the 1973-74 season, the RWB was in the worst financial situation in its history, leaving no money to throw a Bon Voyage party themselves.\(^ {48}\)

Secondly, the media concentration on the NBC tour also reflects the regionalism that informed domestic cultural policies in the 1960s and 70s. The nation and major media outlets were not concerned with a regional ballet company, while local newspapers did report on the national company. Regionalism, therefore, is essential to studying inconsistencies in cultural policies. Dance scholars commonly believe that regionalism was integral to maintaining three companies in Canada. Canada’s vast geography was one of the significant contributors to regionalism because of the expense to tour such a large landmass to expose many Canadians to high art.\(^ {49}\) In addition, Doolittle and Flynn’s application of a post-colonial framework to cultural policies in relation to modern/popular dance, led them to argue that regionalism shaped the

\(^{46}\) Cooper, “Canadian Cultural Diplomacy,” 23.
\(^{47}\) Personal interview with Patti Milne.
\(^{48}\) Wyman, *Royal Winnipeg Ballet*, 160.
\(^{49}\) Smith, “ ‘Stepping Out;’ ” Cornell, “Ballet Problem.”
cultural landscape by designating the arts’ status based on an elite/popular and high/low binary that matched nation/region.  

I argue that Doolittle and Flynn’s post-colonial theory can also be applied to Canadian ballet. While ballet was high art, it did take on many forms and styles. The RWB and the NBC were significantly different in style. While Franca was a pure classical advocate, the RWB took on a contemporary ballet technique. The RWB blended modern and ballet together. As Max Wyman wrote: “The fence that separates classical ballet and modern dance is still up, despite the attempts of the ‘Third Stream’ modernists of the 1960s and 1970s to break it, but the people who have choreographed for the RWB have always had a habit of straddling it, plucking flowers from either side, offering colourful… bouquets.” In this sense, one can apply Doolittle and Flynn’s argument to Canadian ballet as follows: the RWB represented by modern dance and thus became low art compared to the NBC’s traditional classical technique, thereby, reducing the RWB’s status in the eyes of cultural elites. The materialization of this was less funding. Even when the federal government gave additional grants to both companies for the sponsored tours, the RWB received $33,000 less.  

This reduction in status is further compounded when one considers the cultural elite Europe/America binary. George Balanchine is considered the father of American ballet and neoclassical style, described as “modern-yet-classical.” While the RWB did not adopt Balanchine’s style, Spohr was driven by his desire to make a “company one day look like American Ballet Theatre.” I argue that in the Canadian ballet world, the RWB represented America, while the NBC signified Europe. The RWB took on a modern-yet-classical identity and  

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51 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 2-3.  
52 $200,000-$167,000=$33,000  
considered the entertainment value of its ballets in its first decade. This lasting principle, “‘get a classical style’ but diversified repertoire to be able to communicate with the public,” changed hands from the founders, Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, to Arnold Spohr. The RWB’s founding artistic directors, “loved classical ballet, but they recognized they were in a new setting, one in which they might well produce something outside the western ballet tradition.” This included elements that defied the ideal high-European classical art and, subsequently, what was to define Canadian identity by cultural elites, a style Franca felt was important to protect. In an interview in 1971, Franca stated, “we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are a National Ballet. It is our duty to preserve the classical tradition.” As such, Franca was further tying the identity of the company, nationhood, and the preservation of the classical tradition together and acting as safeguard of the ideal culture.

4.3.1 Canadianness through choreography: Ecstasy of Rita Joe vs Session

While critics criticized the NBC’s Canadianness, they praised the RWB. The modern technique infused into the RWB repertoire allowed the company to grow Canadian talent, resulting in the Canadian public being able to latch on to the company’s claim to Canadianness. Thus, the company did not fall victim to the same criticism the NBC had. During the tour, commentaries repeatedly reported that the most popular pieces were What To Do Till The Messiah Comes and Ecstasy of Rita Joe. Canadian-born Norbert Vesak choreographed both ballets. Therefore, reporters considered them to be “totally Canadian.” The RWB used Ecstasy of Rita Joe to connected the RWB to Canada. Their programme for the Cuban audience stated,

54 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 228.
55 Wyman, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 231.
56 Smith, “‘Stepping Out,’” 142.
“they consider it important to show what is in Canada today by reflecting it in their art, so we have their purely Canadian ballet, *Ecstasy of Rita Joe.*”

*Ecstasy of Rita Joe* was a particularly important ballet for Canada in general. It shed light on the reality of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Commissioned by the “Manitoba Indian Brotherhood to mark the centenary of the signing of treaties No. 1 and No. 2 between the Indians of Manitoba and representatives of the crown,” the ballet premiered at the National Arts Centre in 1971. Based on George Ryga’s play, it told the story of a young Indigenous girl’s experience moving to a city, where she endured poverty, drug addiction, and prostitution. David Courchene, an elder of the Anishinaabe Nation, wrote in a statement, “we are appreciative of the opportunity of reaching an audience which, we are sure, is not fully aware of the problems and tragedy faced by many, many of our people today. The story told in the ballet is not fiction to us, nor is it an isolated incident in the reserves, in urban centres throughout this country.” The company earned a standing ovation, and repeated (as many as 17 or 19) curtain calls at the premiere. Critics agreed that the emotion produced by work was powerful. Chief Dan George of the Burrard Tribe in British Columbia, who was heavily involved and played Rita Joe’s father, stated “I was amazed at the reaction (it) received… People came to us to say that now, for the first time they understood a little of what the Native People have suffered and are suffering.”

While the political significance of a commissioned ballet by Indigenous peoples is tremendous, I do not have space to explore it to its fullest due to the scope of my thesis. The purpose of discussing this piece in the context of cultural diplomacy is to show how the RWB

61 Courchene, “native people commission a ballet.”
64 For more information see Kaija Pepper, “ ‘The Manitoba Indian Brotherhood Commissions a Ballet’ *The Ecstasy of Rite Joe* ” in Renegade Bodies: Canadian Dance in the 1970s, ed. Allana C. Lindgren, Kaija Pepper (Toronto: Dance Collection Danse Press/Presse, 2012).
combined modern technique and was successful in being seen as creating distinct Canadian content. That is not to say the RWB “epitomized a distinct and singular Canadian culture,” but rather, by breaking from pure classical European technique, Canadians had an easier time seeing the “Canadianness” of the RWB. It is curious and ironic that a ballet about Indigenous experience was co-opted to represent Canada. Milne mentioned the profound effect the piece had when they performed it in Australia due to the similar colonial past and mixing of white and indigenous people. As a ballet, it leaned heavily on modern techniques. One critic wrote, “It was basically modern dance, with only Rita Joe is a more classical form.” It used multimedium by including a film by Don S. Williams for the set and commentary. Zelda Heller, a reporter for the *Montreal Star*, praised the choreography for its compassion: “Vesak’s sincerity and his near-obsessive compassion style. There is little use of folk elements, nor of cleverly devised balletic ingredients either. His idiom seems dominated throughout by a desperate, painful need to care and to make viewers care.” It was these elements that Latin American reporters discussed. Regarding *Rita Joe*, specifically, one Colombian article wrote, “this ballet is conceived with modern lines, bringing innovation with voices, cinematographic time by an admirable troupe; perfect, forming a pure show of beauty and rhythm.” In Mexico City, Luis Bruno Ruiz wrote, “Vesak shows his sensitivity and imagination… He uses ballet technique, pointe shoes and school steps, allied with the modern school and American ‘pop.’ What we mean here is an attempt at total spectacle with an effect which could not be more impressive.” Similarly, report for the *Cali Colombia* shared these sentiments about the company in general:

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65 Dougherty, “Touring Shakespeare,” 75-76.
68 “The Royal Ballet of Canada,” *Cali Colombia*, May 20, 1974, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives. Translated in archives
69 Luis Bruno Ruiz, “Success of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet of Canada In the Bellas Artes,” *Excelsior*, June 3, 1974, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives. Translated in archives
A selected program for two presentations in which the old and modern mingle, as can be seen from a survey of the dance, which covers it starting from Petipa through Balanchine and Aston and finishing with the most recent choreographer like Butler. This fact alone can measure the interpretative capability of the Canadian troupe because across these schools we can find a delicate romanticism, a dream and marvel of a white ballet from the classic to middle pointe and even bare feet, unconventional dressing the abstract and complex of a fantastic world, so of modern dance. A revolutionary method has been imposed upon modern dance in a most strict classical pattern, without losing its authentic beauty, because a dance in the term of ballet, means a group of dancers where one can admire, within an artistic expression, a most perfected art, expressed by man, when using the movement of his body.

It was in this representation of Canada beyond the name, and through Canadian talent, that the NBC fell short. Franca, in her commitment to classical ballet standards, paid little to no attention to representing “Canada” on stage. She only picked one Canadian piece to be included in the repertoire for the European tour, a piece called Session. This piece did not receive the praise that Ecstasy of Rita Joe got. Session was choreographed by Robert Iscove and premiered in Windsor in February 1972. The piece mixed rock, blues, and third-stream music, with love at the centre of the ballet. It is about a boy and girl and their “valiant search for their loved ones” because they needed love. According to Rowes, “the theme [was] not treated in a novel enough style to arouse any new interest.” Rowes further criticized the piece for changing music and lighting, causing an “uncomfortable and alienating feeling.” In Europe, it was not performed during the important gala opening night, which critics noticed. Thirteen days later it was finally presented and received negative critiques. Littler, quoted the Daily Telegram, called the piece “an exhausting choreographic conglomeration.” Following the European tour, the NBC never

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70 White ballet refers to ballets where the dancers wear white. For Example, Swan Lake or Le Sylphides.
71 “The Royal Ballet of Canada,” Cali Colombia.
72 Barbara Gail Rowes, “Ballet troupe at ease only with La Sylphide,” Globe Mail, April 24, 1972.
73 Rowes, “Ballet troupe at ease only with La Sylphide,” Globe Mail.
74 Rowes, “Ballet troupe at ease only with La Sylphide,” Globe Mail.
performed it again. While the comparison of *Session* to *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is slightly unfair, insofar as they were choreographed by different choreographers and tell a different story, one simple and the other highly emotional. These differences can affect the audience reception, as the choreography can be a secondary issue in emotional pieces. However, in comparing the works, what does come clear is the NBC’s failure to present an element that the public could latch on to as Canadian beyond their name—an aspect of identity that is easily changed, as evidenced by the fact that a Latin American news source called the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Royal Ballet of Canada. Therefore, while *Session*’s failure does not diminish the NBC’s successes with other pieces, particularly the European classics, it does point out contradictions in Canadian domestic and foreign cultural policies and the public’s interest in culture. The NBC, the company that represented high-European art to the utmost, received half of the allotted Canadian funds for ballet, based on the *idea* that they represented Canada. At the same time, the RWB, which incorporated popular and modern dance and was *viewed* as more “Canadian” by the public, split the remainder of the funds with Les Grands Ballet Canadiens (LGBC).

Significantly, while the press focused on the impact of Canadian choreography in Latin America, they were also actively defining what was “Canadian.” They judged and discussed what pieces made an impact of the audience. Yet, in discussing the reception from Latin American audiences with dancers, they recalled other well received pieces. Most noteworthy, the *Pas de Deux Romantique*. One dancer, Anonymous, recalled that when the dancers ‘finished the performance [of *Pas de Deux Romantique*].…, of course there’s this thunderous, boom, boom, boom, with all the feet and all the applause. Repeat, repeat, encore, encore, yells of encore, encore.’

This piece was only mentioned twice in the newspaper, once in the *Winnipeg Tribune* and once in the *Globe and Mail*. Both times the reporters simply noted that there was a request for an encore in Rio de Janeiro. The lack of major discussion of this piece was not significant

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76 Interviewee 04, (Dancer, Royal Winnipeg Ballet), interviewed by author, November 2020.
because of its a romantic style or that a British choreographer, Jack Carter, choreographed the work, but rather, because it was performed by a white woman and a black man: Marina Eglevsky or Bonnie Wykoff and Sylvester Campbell. Milne spoke at length about the significant of an interracial partnership in Latin America and in Canada:

We had a principal dancer who was black, and that Pas de Deux used to bring down the house between a white woman and a black man. And it was very classical Pas de Deux. They always got an encore. And I don’t know if it was because it was the mixed-race aspect of it that for them would have been unusual in a ballet company, especially from Canada. It’s funny we never thought two things about it. But I think about it in today’s light how back in the 70s that we presented a classical Pas de Deux with a black man and a white woman. That was pretty astounding when I think back on it, you know, that time period. And just – he was a great dancer that’s all we cared about. He was really good. He was fun, great, he was good looking and we never thought about the other ramifications and I’m wondering if that’s why it was so popular on this tour. That had something to do with it. I don’t know.”

By not substantially discussing the piece in the press, I propose that journalists did not have to contend with the fact a black man and white woman dancing together while also representing Canada, and thus they could feed into the notion that “Canadianness” was synonymous with whiteness.

The elusive nature of Campbell’s racial identity in the press under normal circumstances, however, complicates this idea. Throughout the 1970s his race was noted three times. First in 1972 in the Winnipeg Tribune when he was introduced as the principal dancer for the RWB, the report quoted a London Daily Telegraph critic: “In a Pas de Deux from Le Corsair, it was a joy to see Sylvester Campbell, the great American Negro dancer, leaping and spinning with marvelous spontaneity, ease, pure classical style and almost incredible elevation.” And then again in 1975,
when he partnered a black ballerina, Sandra Fortune, from the Capitol Ballet Company in Washington, D.C in the Nutcracker. Finally, in 1979, the Globe and Mail did a human interest piece on him when he “finally jumped the color barrier in the United States” by becoming a choreographer. In this article, the reporter discussed the difficulties for a black man to dance in the United States. There was nothing spoken about his experience in Canada, and it was after Campbell retired from the RWB. This limited discussion of race resembled the publicity for the NBC in its formative years. Allana Lindgren discussed the absence of commentary on racial diversity in the company and in the press, even when it came to Robert Ito, a corps de ballet member and a Canadian-born dancer of Japanese descent. She wrote, “this lack of commentary is curious and perhaps indicative of progressive attitudes within the arts communities and the press in Canada and parts of the United States. It also might signal that ballet is a meritocracy: skin colour cannot obscure or trump talent and technical ability.” The latter reason comes through in Milne’s explanations above. Lindgren further argued, “white bodies performing a European-originated dance style subtly conveyed an ideal that validated the hegemony of the racial status quo in Canada. … In short, the absence of racial diversity in the Company’s publicity materials and the media’s human-interest stories appear to have unwittingly reinscribed the tandem views that ‘high’ art really meant art created by and for White people, and that Canadian culture more generally was the exclusive purview of White Canadians.” However, since Campbell’s skin colour was black and he was a principal dancer, he complicates the racial history of ballet in Canada and its absence of mention in the press. Based on the reporting that was done in the 1970s, it appears that his skin colour was mainly a topic when it was in relationship with United States. More research needs to be done on race, ballet, and Canada as it is severely underexplored

80 “Black dancer to make leap to choreography,” Globe and Mail, March 15, 1979, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
in the literature. However, I propose that by not placing much weight on his racial identity, the media were inadvertently reinforcing the status quo because without seeing a photo or the ballet in person, the general public would not be confronted with his race and could continue to ascribe “Whiteness” to ballet.

4.3.2 Cultural Ambassadors: image building or relationship building

As we have seen, some dance scholars speculate that the RWB’s ability to develop such a different style was because the artistic director was not trying to establish a national company. However, as in Jamaica eleven years earlier, the RWB members recognized their role as cultural ambassadors. This time they were more open about it. In a house programme following their tour to Latin America, John Randolph in a house programme discussed the diplomatic nature of the company, noting first that accepting money for the federal government came with strings:

A decidedly ‘Canadian’ (or national) mandate seems to be suggested for the company. Indeed, the Federal Government’s agency most interested in the subject, the Touring Office of the Canada Council, encourages Canada’s three major ballet companies not to confine their activities to their home areas but to make them available everywhere in the land from Victoria to St. John They are also wanted abroad where Canada’s embassies feel foreign populations could benefit from direct evidence that Canada has outstanding enthusiasm and ability in the arts…To accept federal support on a big scale must imply also accepting national objectives in the arts where they are urged.83

Randolph also indicated that to not accept the funding the company would be committing suicide. The house programme further discussed the Latin America tour specifically when they provided an article titled, “The Royal Winnipeg Ballet on tour seeing and being seen in South America,” which outlined in detail the diplomatic prominence of the tour:

Canada’s embassy in Brazil cabled Ottawa after noting that half the Brazilian cabinet attended the show: ‘Royal Winnipeg Ballet

provided a unique occasion to cement personal relationships with individuals who are running the country and focus attention on Canada in unprecedented way.’ The Havana embassy likewise praised the artistic success of the tour and gave its own point of view: ‘We were particularly gratified by the way in which the most ambitious cultural project we have attempted here contributed a new and deeper dimension to the development of Canadian-Cuban relations.”

They concluded that the tour was a success because “the sponsors, Canada’s Department of External Affairs, got what they wanted from the project in all fifteen cities, and everybody came back changed for the better.”

On the part of the dancers, there was some awareness of this aspect of the tour; however, as in Jamaica, dancers’ positions with regard to the official part of the job varied. Eric Horenstein, a RWB soloist, stated “yes, we felt like cultural ambassadors, particularly in foreign lands.” While Milne said they did not know why they were going on the tour, they were “like trained monkeys,” but ultimately the dancers became cultural ambassadors. Interestingly, however, when the dancers spoke of their feeling surrounding representing Canada, a couple of dancers mentioned family dynamics and the unity among the dancers. Anonymous stated:

I think basically all the dancers in the company, no matter where we came from, we were a family, and we were very closed knit and...our lives just intertwined in all sorts of ways. Some of us were intermarried, and what have you. And you lived together, you worked together, you toured together. You’re like this big extended family, and so there’s was nothing like necessarily Canadian, or necessarily U.S. There was, you know, people from Australia and... from England... U.S, and Canada, from all over the place and um it was a nice hodgepodge melting pot that we were all friends and family, and we were all there to dance our best for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet because that was our reason for being, basically at the time. So, it wasn’t really a national -- it was kind of like a United Nations in a way. Here we all are in

84 “The Royal Winnipeg Ballet on tour seeing and being seen in South America,” 17, Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives, Cuba October 2-6, 1974 programme, 003.
85 “Royal Winnipeg Ballet on tour seeing and being seen in South America,” 17.
86 Horenstien, interview.
87 Milne, interview.
Horenstein also added to his discussion saying, “artistic diversities aside, we were also unified and team spirited, as ever directed by Mr. Spohr. Last words before curtain, anywhere at all: ‘Stick Together, No Matter What.’ That directive always came as an Order, a map, and a Dare. Company culture was beyond exclusive, it was Family, advantageous and not so.”89 This correlation lends to idea that ballet dancers were more concerned by the dancing and the company. Yet, despite this dynamic, in publicity recognizing and vocalizing the cultural diplomacy aspect of the tour, the RWB personnel show that they were still willing to take on and embraced this role. And thus, they were not immune to the state policies even though they were not the specified national company; they were still operating within the general idea that ballet is a high-art and ideal Canadian culture.

Studying the different approaches in the NBC’s tour to Europe and the RWB’s tour to Latin America highlights contradictions in Canada’s cultural diplomacy policies and their application. The NBC took on the traditional Canadian cultural diplomacy mandate. According to Cooper, “Canada’s cultural diplomacy serves a dual function in foreign affairs:” image-building and federalism.90 The NBC’s tour of Europe was neatly connected to these functions. For the latter, Europe’s location was a reaction to Quebec’s cultural initiatives in Western Europe. The NBC’s tour also epitomized the image-building mission because the prominent focus was on the programme’s importance to the company’s reputation. Cooper stated, “great value has certainly been placed on the role international cultural relations can play in winning prestige and respect for Canada internationally and on dispelling the ‘logs and rocks’ perception of Canada, thereby

88 Interviewee 04, interview.
89 Horenstein, interview.
allowing the projection of a more distinct identity abroad.”91 Veronica Tennant, NBC’s principal dancer, discussed concerns about the potential lack of respect they could receive prior to the tour. In an article in the *Calgary Herald*, she is quoted saying, “thing that bothers me the most… is that there might be a patronizing attitude towards us. I’d hate that.” Roy Shields, the reporter, further explained, “behind her statement is the National Ballet’s desire to be judged on its merits. There is little comfort in becoming living proof to skeptical European sophisticates that not all Canadians are hockey players or figure skaters.”92 In other words, there was a sense that the NBC performances could help show the Canadian culture beyond hockey or “logs and rocks” and emerge a mature nation by proving that Canada had a strong ballet tradition that could hold its own against the top companies in the world, and that Canada had “quality” culture. While the tour did receive praise, it also received criticism. Thus, it cannot be completely determined if the tour affected people’s perceptions of Canada.

The RWB, on the other hand, did not necessarily fit neatly in Canada’s cultural diplomacy functions. They were not sent to a location to counter Quebec’s foreign interest. However, their tour did align with Canada’s diversification mandate as Latin America provided significant opportunities to build political, economic, and trade relations beyond the United States. In addition, the tour, from a publicity standpoint, was not merely about the reputation of the company and its image-building potential. That is not to say the company’s success was not important to the RWB and Canada’s image. Horenstein recalled the pressure the dancers were under to put on a perfect performance despite what was happening their lives. He wrote: “Look, life gets in the way, there are Pre Sold Out houses to please, cast replacements to implement seamlessly, (you’d better know it) and outsized everything hovering in every wing and direction. The collective reputation is riding on it, and Artistic staff has been on steroidal medication for

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[w]eeks. You’d better make [b]rilliant your curtain up status quo, or your immediate future will be finished.”

Externally, the RWB recognized and emphasized the tour’s significance to Canadian foreign relations with the host countries more than the company’s development: a strategy that they began in 1963 when they went to Jamaica. As a result, the tour became not just about image-building for Canada and the RWB performance, but also about building relationships.

In addition, while Canadian policies focused on “periodic artistic presentations,” the RWB troupe opened up and participated in opportunities for “ongoing cultural activities,” which, according to Cooper, was the norm around the world. For starters, during the tour, the dancers participated in a display of ongoing friendship with Managua, Nicaragua, a city that was devastated by an earthquake in 1972. When in Managua, the RWB gave a charity performance and took part in a tour/parade on Canadian fire trucks gifted to the city following the earthquake to honour the country and the company. While the company was “given a tour of the city on the fire truck sent from Canada…, people were out on the streets, cheering waving at us.”

According to Anonymous, “they were celebrating us being there and also celebrating the appreciation they had for the Canadian fire trucks that had been sent. It was sort of a combination, a big joyous, brotherhood kind of happiness thing there. Like thank you for helping us out and let’s have a little parade, you know.” As such, the RWB company was an extension of an ongoing friendship between Canada and Nicaragua. Additionally, the RWB personnel did not stop acting as cultural ambassadors when they arrived home. They shared what they saw in Latin America to their Canadian audiences by writing an article in their first House programme upon their return mentioned above. The article provided the audience with the “many impressions of

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93 Horenstien, interview.
95 Little is known about the charity performance with current sources.
96 Interviewee 04, interview.
97 Interviewee 04, interview.
the nine countries their tour,” particularly from the perspective of Richard Rutherford, associate artistic director. The article commented on the geography, shopping, museums and art galleries, as well as Nicaragua following the earthquake that devastated the area, etc.\textsuperscript{98} For example, the article stated, “Richard Rutherford was markedly awed by a modern art gallery in Sao Paulo which was built on stilts and had a glass elevator.”\textsuperscript{99} The reality, however, was that there was not much time for external excursions for the dancers, according to Anonymous dancer. Milne also recalled; she did not go to museums because it would use up her energy that was required to perform.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{RWB Dancers with students of the Modern Dance Company of Cuba. Photo by Peter Garrick; courtesy of Canada’s Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives.}
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\textsuperscript{98} “The Royal Winnipeg Ballet on tour seeing and being seen in South America,” 15-17. Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives, South American Report, 002.

\textsuperscript{99} “The Royal Winnipeg Ballet on tour seeing and being seen in South America,” 16.
Furthermore, the RWB, and specifically Spohr, provided opportunities for the government to expand and build ongoing cultural relationships with Latin America. In Cuba, the RWB dancers were photographed with the Modern dance Company of Cuba, which presents some level of relationship with the local dancers (figure 4.1). In discussing a relationship with the National Ballet of Cuba, one RWB personnel wrote in a concluding report, “we saw the Alonso Company and school. The set-up is terrific. I am going to get Alonso to Banff next year and an Afro-Cuban modern dancer. They were marvellous. Dance is universal, as Alicia said, when we were her guests at the school. No one can change this language which has not barriers. We have excellent photos, taken of her students, classes, company and all of us together…”100 Spohr also brought Argentina choreography to Winnipeg. In Buenos Aires, Spohr built a relationship with Oscar Ariaz, a young acclaimed Argentinian choreographer, whose ballets intrigued Spohr. The RWB dancers attended a rehearsal for this ballet. Milne remembered being blown away by Ariaz’s ballet, *Family Scenes*, stating, “it was just so dramatic and fabulous!”101 Later in Rio de Janeiro, Spohr met with Araiz to negotiate bringing him to Winnipeg.102 Following the tour, the RWB mounted three ballets by Araiz, *Adagietto pas de deux*, *Family Scenes* and *Mahler 4: Eternity Is Now*. In 1978, Araiz dominated the RWB programme in New York. Over this time, Araiz formed a relationship with Bonnie Wykoff that lasted beyond their careers at the RWB.103 While this artistic relationship occurred because Spohr had an interest in Ariaz, and when Spohr wanted something he went after it,104 it extended Canada’s connection to Argentina. However, due to Canadian policies prioritizing one-off cultural diplomacy initiatives, it appears that the government did not capitalize on these occasions and relationships to help further their growing Latin American interests.

101 Milne, interview.
103 Milne, interview.
104 Milne, interview.
4.4 Conclusion

While it is difficult to completely determine political influence as a result of the tours, they provide an opportunity to study issues from an official and artistic level. The public’s reaction to both tours reveals that the devotion of art institutions and the federal government to the classics and reliance on British heritage challenged the emerging Canadian perception of “what is Canadian.” Even after the NBC tours, the federal government was pushing the narrative that the NBC was Canadian. The Canada Council, in a statement about the NBC engagement, observed, “the Council is pleased to note that apart from the corps, which is really all Canadian, most of the leading positions are filled by Canadians. The workshop activities of the National Ballet continue to be of crucial importance with the promise they offer of emerging choreographers of quality.”\(^{105}\) This statement does align with the public’s idea of “what is Canadian;” they saw the value in nurturing Canadian talent. However, this statement was a counter to the continued critiques and overall image the public had of the NBC, revealing that the federal government and the public’s image of Canada did not align.

These tours also highlighted the challenges associated with striving for a company to represent Canada internationally. Celia Franca strongly advocated that the NBC was the national ballet company; however, this declaration had limitations in reality. It was her artistic vision, rather than her nationalistic identity that guided the development of the NBC. As a result, the 1972 European tour showed that while the federal government and Franca’s goals aligned geographically, the nuances of their missions did not. At the heart of Franca’s goal was to build the best company in Canada on classical traditions and prove that she could “bring” ballet to Canada, and part of this goal was taking the NBC to Europe. Doing so for Franca was not necessarily in the “duty of Canada.” The RWB, on the other hand, did not explicitly define themselves as a national company but rather subtly took on the responsibility of cultural

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ambassadors for the survival of the company and the opportunity to travel. Their subtle nature, however, allowed the company to grow Canadian talent throughout the years. They were not required to uphold classical, European traditions, which allowed the company to consider the audience and what they enjoyed. In turn, when officially representing Canada, the public did not question the federal government’s reasoning. Overall, government sponsored ballet tours reveal the fluidity of motivations, desires, and policies in the development of cultural institutions and an international cultural reputation.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

“From a personal experience, it is exhilarating for artists to be on world stages; it challenges our dancers to go beyond their usual comfort zone and achieve even more artistry and technical excellence!” - André Lewis, the current artistic director and chief executive officer of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.¹

“The National Ballet of Canada continued to make significant gains in 2018/19 within a climate of steady leadership and fiscal balance. With the support of an engaged donor community, we were able to tour overseas, collaborate on new work, host an international competition and offer a variety of engagement programmes to our diverse audiences nationwide.” - Barry Hughson, current Executive Director of the National Ballet of Canada.²

Intertwined in foreign Canadian ballet exchanges are narratives of artistic development and political importance. Starting in 1958 with Mexico and continuing through the mid-twentieth century in multiple other countries, international tours have helped ballet companies solidify themselves as noteworthy Canadian cultural institutions while also furthering state interests by building foreign relations. To this day, the National Ballet of Canada (NBC) and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) continue to maintain an ongoing international and national reputation promoting diplomatic relations by touring abroad. As a recent example, in 2018, the NBC travelled to Hamburg, Germany and Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia. This tour was the first time the entire 100-person company visited Russia, expanding diplomatic, cultural and artistic exchanges. The fact that both countries recognized the importance of sending and welcoming

100 dancers demonstrates the importance of these kinds of exchanges that began with visits to the Global South in the late 1950s and 1960s. The company’s performance in 2018 was well-received for its contemporary pieces. Chris Brown, a CBC reporter, wrote, “It may be a country that gave rise to Swan Lake, The Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty, but Canada’s top ballet dancers wowed a Moscow audience as it opened its first-ever tour of Russia with a program of contemporary dance.”

Quebec-born NBC principal dancer Guillaume Côté also spoke on the importance of Canadian dance internationally, stating, “Russia has been a really wonderful centre of classical dance for a long time. But now they are discovering contemporary dance and developing it in a new way. To be here with the entire National Ballet and representing contemporary dance in Canada is very special.”

More recently, and building upon previous visits by both the NBC and RWB, the RWB travelled to Guanajuato, Mexico, in 2019 to participate in the Festival Internacional Cervantino, one of the largest performing arts festivals in the world. Canadian ballet connections to Mexico have a long history. According to the Canada Council, Canadian involvement in this festival in 2019 “proved to be an ideal occasion to celebrate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Mexico,” demonstrating that ballet has helped to build, shape and continue diplomatic relations between the two countries. Both of the recent performances show the continued space held by ballet companies in the cultural landscape of Canada, the world, and cultural diplomacy; three essential aspects to ballet exchanges.

Foundational to the NBC and the RWB’s abilities to solidify themselves as noteworthy Canadian cultural institutions and their ongoing success were their first tours outside of Canada.

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4 Guillaume Côté quoted in Brown, “National Ballet of Canada dazzles audiences on first-ever tour of Russia,” CBC.
and the United States: the NBC tours to Mexico in 1958 and 1968, and the RWB tour to Jamaica in 1963. During these small, less-known tours, each company developed and established strategies to ensure international progression. For the NBC, personnel explicitly identified the company operating for Canada during their tours to Mexico while also specifying the tour’s importance to the company. They used nationalistic language and prepared the dancers to act as cultural ambassadors. Furthermore, Celica Franca connected its artistic direction to the Canadian cultural mandates because the cultural elite and Franca viewed European classics as superior. As a result, the NBC personnel connected the company’s progression to a national identity. The RWB personnel, on the other hand, implicitly or more subtly took on the role of cultural ambassadors. Instead of voicing this narrative in an effort to be viewed as the ideal Canadian company to travel abroad for Canada, the RWB personnel simply acted and internalized the state’s interest. In publicity, they often downplayed the significance of the tour to the company’s growth to focus on diplomatic importance. Part of this strategy required the dancers to take part in cultural exchanges beyond performing. Moreover, unlike the NBC, the RWB artistic expression strayed from the classical, British style. Thus, they could not directly and did not fuse the company’s growth and artistic development to national interest because they performed “pop” and modern pieces that moved them closer to American culture.

Through these strategies, the companies gained opportunities to travel abroad, which was vital during the time period. In the mid-twentieth century, this was crucial to growing an international reputation because it simultaneously helped to achieve national success. Cultural elites and the Canada Council valued more mature countries’ and experts’ opinions to dictate what was good in Canada. As such, the international and national reputations were intertwined. Therefore, while the current ballet history literature often cites events in Canada and the United States for establishing the companies’ status in Canada, they neglected to tell an essential piece of the history. The NBC’s 1958 and 1968 Mexico and the RWBs 1963 Jamaica engagements
entered the NBC and the RWB in a global exchange of ballet that allowed their reputation to build beyond Canada and United States with successful performances, even if the performances were not in front of “ideal or critical audiences.” These early tours also became evidence of their ability to promote Canadian culture abroad, which led the NBC and the RWB to achieve more extensive tours and garner more state support in the 1970s when the government directly focused on cultural diplomacy endeavours. Thus, these tours are intertwined in the development of Canadian ballet. If the companies had not started expanding their horizons in the late 1950s and 1960s, it is questionable if the NBC and the RWB would have solidified such a prominent position in Canadian cultural landscape.

Beyond the positive impact these early international tours had on the ballet company’s trajectory as a national institution, these exchanges also benefited the Canadian government. Firstly, by touring and receiving mostly positive reviews, the NBC and the RWB showed the world Canada’s emerging “distinct” culture and branded Canada as a mature country. Thus, they furthered the cultural elites' desires for Canada to match the cultures and powers of England, America, and France. Secondly, these tours help build a relationship between Canada and the host countries that did not require much effort from the Canadian state. Ultimately, these tours were an act of exchange; the ballet company offering their talents, while the host country offered their hospitality, with both hoping to achieve some positive outcome. However, they were also Canadian institutions, thus they represented Canada. Canadian elites and media viewed these exchanges with the host country’s cultural institution as building connections between the two countries. These connections, however, were developed by bringing together the motivations of the ballet companies and the drives of the host country to create a mutually beneficial tour. The Canadian government was often barely involved in the early tour’s negotiations. Yet, the Canadian government benefited from these outcomes because the NBC and the RWB personnel as well as media, to various degrees and ways, internalized and embodied the nation's interests.
abroad, i.e. nation branding and building a political, cultural and economic foreign relationship. As such, the non-state actors had a significant role in advancing diplomatic relations.

Ultimately, the artistic and political duality within cultural exchanges operated alongside each other relatively harmoniously within the Mexico and Jamaica tours. The ballet companies, the Canadian government and the host country profited, with the artistic institutions and private sectors being the main driver. In other words, the final iteration of the tour overlapped the incentives of all parties involved. This dynamic, however, shifted when the government changed cultural diplomacy policies in the 1970s to increase its focus on cultural exchanges and the perception abroad. As a result, the 1970s sponsored tours were of higher profile, with a more directly designed political purpose to combat Quebec’s international presence, as the NBC and the RWB were officially representing Canada. This increased government attention abroad, complicated and challenged ballet companies’ stated relationships with nationalism, particularly the NBC, as the ballet companies’ artistic development were no longer the primary incentive from a Canadian perspective. The political motivations now had an equal footing in tours. As a result, the NBC did not live up to its national identity as an equal desire with the government for location of the tour ultimately revealed the company’s true motivations; that is, of acting to promote their own interests, and not necessarily those of Canada. In addition, the national identity of the company was more scrutinized by the Canadian public than in previous years, resulting in cracks developing in the NBCs previously voiced national narrative. The RWB, on the other hand, was able to continue an ongoing Canadian perception of itself similar to its time in Jamaica. In other words, the Canadian public questioned the NBC national identity, while celebrating the Canadianness of the RWB.

In summary, the ongoing relationship of ballet companies in Canada with the Canadian government constantly requires the NBC and the RWB to negotiate between national identity,
their artistic development, the company’s motivations and governmental interests. As we have seen, this process is complex and ever evolving.
Appendix A

Research Ethics Board (GREB) Approval

March 3, 2021

Miss van Asselt
Master’s Student
Department of History
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GHIS-082-21; TRAQ 6032036
Title: "GHIS-082-21 Dancing Beyond Canada: The history of the National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballets' exchanges with Latin America and Europe, 1958-1974"

Dear Miss van Asselt:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GHIS-082-21 Dancing Beyond Canada: The history of the National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballets' exchanges with Latin America and Europe, 1958-1974" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405), your project has been cleared for one year.

You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at [http://www.queensu.ca/trac/tracform.html#] click on "Events," under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Rome/traq indicating that the project is ‘completed’ so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one-year period (access this form at [http://www.queensu.ca/trac/tracform.html#] click on "Events," under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at [http://www.queensu.ca/trac/tracform.html#] click on "Events," under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies." Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, GREB, at University Research Services for further review and clearance by GREB or the Chair, GREB.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chair, General Research Ethics Board (GREB)
Professor Dean A. Tripp, PhD
Departments of Psychology, Anesthesiology & Urology Queen’s University

:: Dr. Karen Dubinsky, Supervisor
### Bibliography

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Royal Winnipeg Ballet Archives. Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Winnipeg.


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